RBCC 147

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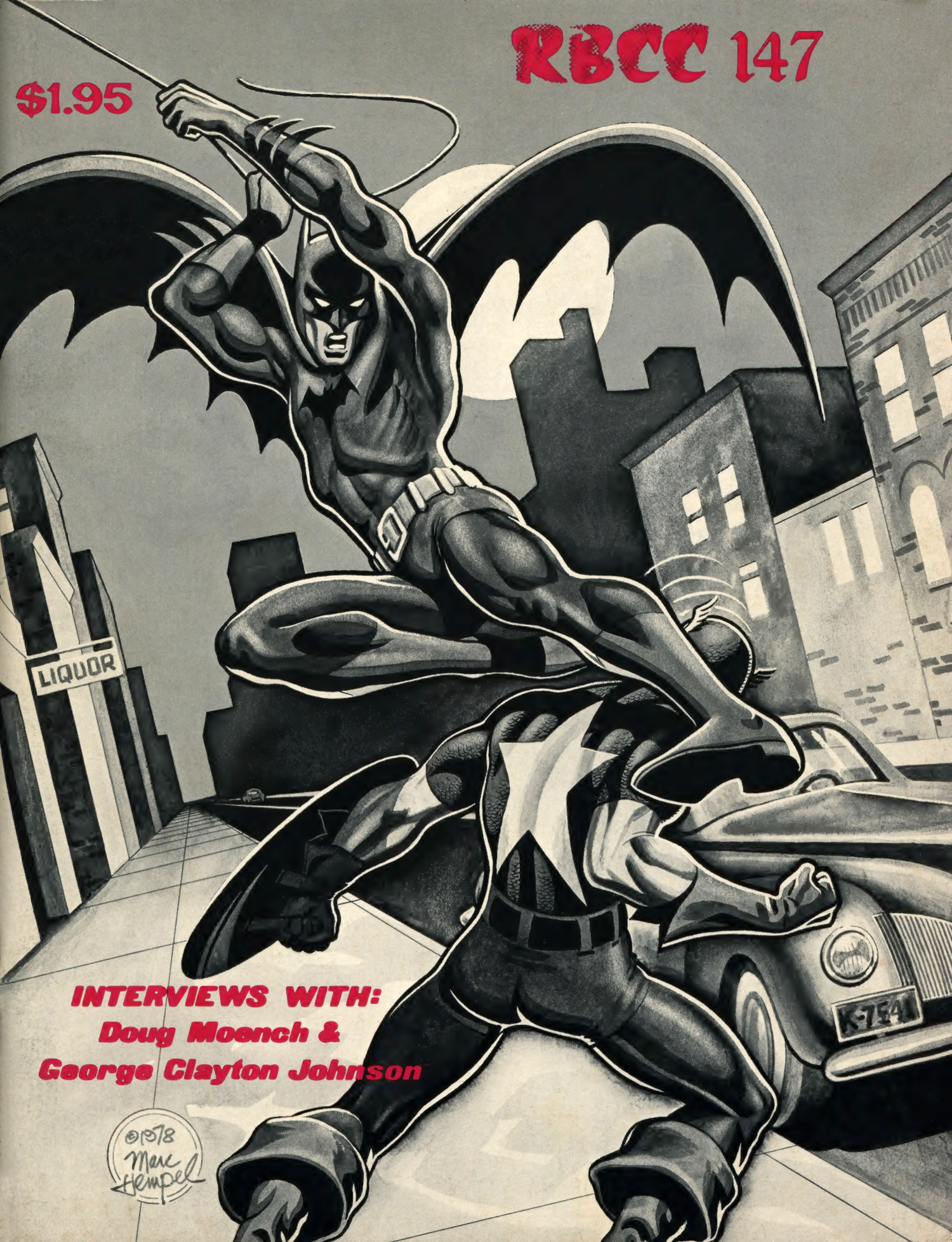
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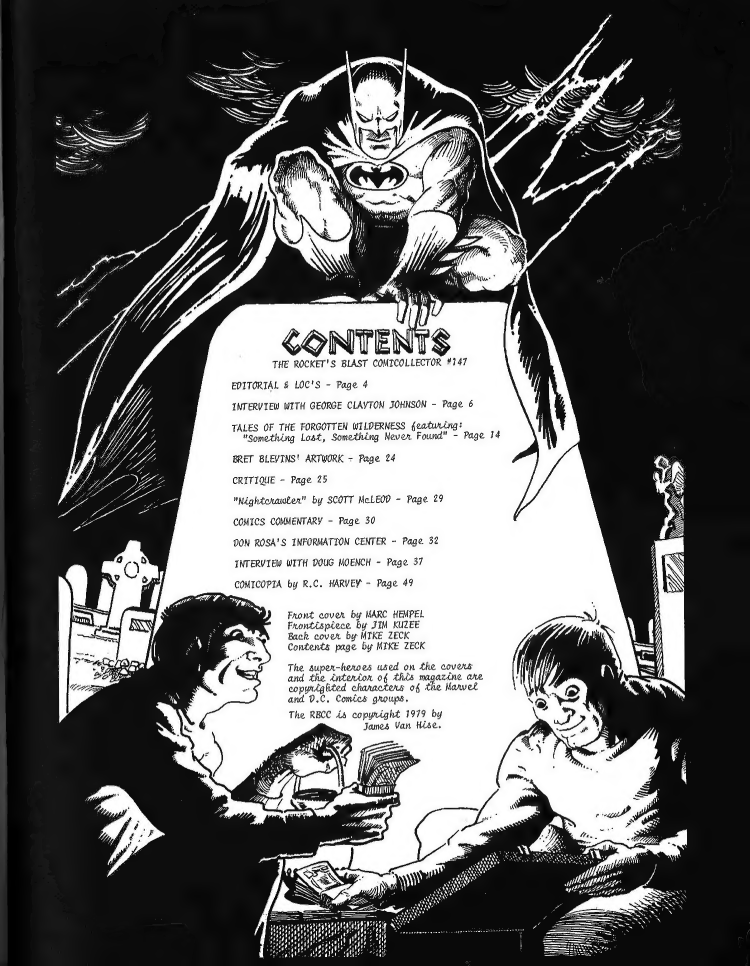

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Frontispiece by JIM KUZEE
Back cover by MIKE ZECK
Contents page by MIKE ZECK

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FEBRUARY 1979

FULL PAGE ADVERTISEMENTS: $35.00 per page - These ads occupy a full page when printed in the RB&CC. They may be submitted on sheets from 8 1/2 x 11 to 15 x 20, bearing in mind that it will be reduced down to 8 1/2 x 11.

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AVAILABLE BACK ISSUES OF THE RB&CC ARE LISTED BELOW. THEY ARE $2.00 EACH FROM THE S.F.C.A. Add 50¢ postage

#'s 57, 58, 106, 107, 120, 121, 123, 124, 125, 127, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 135, 136, 137, 138, 140, 141, 144, 145, 146 [139 & 142 = $3.00 each]

THE ROCKET'S BLAST COMICOLLECTOR is published by James Van Hise, 10885 Parkdale Avenue, San Diego, Cal. 92126 EDITOR & PUBLISHER: JAMES VAN HISE, EDITOR EMERITUS: GORDON B. LOVE
STAFF ARTISTS: *Hilary Barta, Steve Bissette, Bret Blevins, Martin Cannon, Eddie Eddings, Ralph Fowler, Kerry Gammill, Tim Hammell, Fred Hembeck, John Kuzee, Scott McLeod, Jan Newsome, Don Rosa and Ron Wilber.* Contributions are always welcomed, but they should always include return postage if you want it returned.

THE ADVERTISING DEADLINES FOR THE NEXT TWO ISSUES OF THE RBCC ARE: MARCH 15th
MAY 15th
THE RBCC IS PUBLISHED BI-MONTHLY

AD DEADLINES ARE ALSO CONTRIBUTION DEADLINES!

This issue I've gone out on a bit of a limb to try something that has never been done in the RBCC before, and have left myself wide open to criticism by doing so. Under the feature heading *TALES OF THE FORGOTTEN WILDERNESS*, I have included a text fiction story written by me. Some may feel this is a bit presumptuous and perhaps even pretentious, but I wanted to try it anyway. The story itself had an interesting genesis for without RON WILBER, it would not exist. Last summer, Ron sent me a page with 3 illustrations on it to see if I might want to use them for something. He had drawn them for his own amusement and not for anything specific. These three illos appear as two of the spot illos and the one half page drawing with the story. The characters and the scenes he'd drawn all seemed interesting to me and I told him that I'd probably write a story around them. Six months later I did just that. Since fiction is much more difficult to do and do well, this story went through three complete drafts before it saw print. I tried to polish it as much as possible. The characters intrigued me because I saw the chance to do a different kind of sword and sorcery story with them. The kind the form generally evades. I tried to write about people caught up in events, and not just events catching up people. The full page illo near the end was done by Ron after he read my first draft, and the openning fantasy illo by Ron had also been done earlier and seemed to fit the fantasy ambience I had in mind for the series as a whole. Even if you readers happen to *like* what I did, the series would only appear once every four issues or so at best and may even be relegated to my new companion magazine for the RBCC which is FANTASTIC EXPLOITS (check out the ads on page 48 and the inside back cover.)

HEMPEL

BURBEY

The RBCC's art staff has been growing by leaps and bounds. I'm constantly amazed by the increasing quality of work being presented to me. This issue ushers in another new staff artist in the form of SCOTT McLEOD. His drawing on page 29 is a fitting introduction if I ever saw one. Scott will be doing a regular feature on the X-MEN for the RBCC.

The drawing by BRET BLEVINS on page 24 is a personal favorite of his. It was done back in 1976, when he was about 16!

MARC HEMPEL provides the front cover this issue in a different kind of "*WHAT IF?*" which I think would make for a far more interesting cross-over than Superman & Spidey.

The back cover by MIKE ZECK is an unused cover he did for the issue of PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN he drew a few months back.

We've got two very long interviews this time with two very different writers.

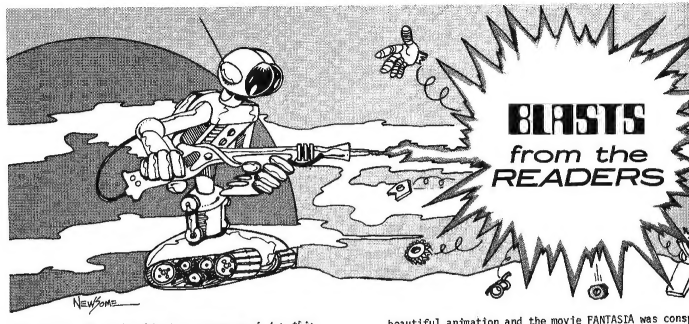
The DOUG MOENCH interview covers a lot of territory and presents a lot of information. Accompanying it is not only artwork from the "Future History" series he wrote, but also an illo by DENNIS FUJITAKE of two of the characters Doug has written. There is also a very attractive spot illo by MARTIN CANNON of another strip Doug writes.

The interview with GEORGE CLAYTON JOHNSON focuses on the world of television and SF writing and presents a lot of fascinating ideas.

COMICS COMMENTARY has an appropriate illo by DENNIS FUJITAKE (which is available from him for $30.00. Write me.)

There's also art by JIM KUZEE, JIM NEWSOME and his pal.

RBCC CONTRIBUTORS



[EDITORIAL]: *I wasn't able to announce much for this issue in advance because so much was up in the air, but I can sure announce a lot for next time! There will be a long section featuring interviews with DAN O'BANNON and RON COBB concentrating on the forthcoming SF film* ALIEN *(due out in May). The RBCC with all this will appear about a month before the film comes out. Also slated for next issue...the triumphant return of DON ROSA's "Pertwillaby Papers" with the first chapter of the new adventure..."Knighttime". Also on tap are covers by Ron Wilber, Don Rosa and Steve Fabian! Also waiting to burst forth is a long article on comics from 1956-67 by Howard Siegel including a whole lot of brand new art specially drawn for that article by our ever increasing art staff. Fandom is producing more fine artists now than ever before.*

*The ever increasing amount of material becoming available to me is causing me to launch a brand new magazine with an old title...*FANTASTIC EXPLOITS! *Check out the ads for it in this issue. It's a new RBCC!*

* * *

Dear RBCC:

RBCC #145 was the first issue I bought, but since then I've picked up four or five other issues. #146 was disappointing. First off, the wrap-around cover wasn't such a good idea. The front cover looks strange until you realize you are only seeing half of it, and the cardboard is not ideal for spreading it out and enjoying it. Also, I've never read Elfquest, but I think that two covers and a centerspread is a little much for something that's only been out for two issues. [EDITOR'S NOTE: *Au contraire. When something is great it should be trumpeted and promoted lest it disappear because not enough people are aware of it to support it. ELFQUEST needs continued and increasing support and I feel that #146 is doing that. I personally know of people who were pleased to hear that such a thing even existed and have become big ELFQUEST fans as a result.*]

The article on Young Frankenstein was good, as was the accompanying artwork. But the movie has been gone for quite awhile, so the article is not exactly a timely piece. [EDITOR'S NOTE: *Since when should interest be measured by something's proximity in time? To do so would be fad-ish. Today STAR WARS, tomorrow...?*]

The Avengers index was good, even though I'll probably never see more than a handful of the shows. What years are The New Avengers from? [NOTE: *1976 & 1977*]

R.C. Harvey's Comicopia was a bit long and critical. Disney cartoons and movies (and Disneyland) are entertainment, and not meant as social comment or whatever. If I go to a movie to be entertained, why should I want to see the seemy side of life? Mention of Disney's beautiful animation and the movie FANTASIA was conspicuously absent. FANTASIA must be art-because I thought it was boring as all!

Critique had its usual offering of fanzines-lots of tens this time. But I can't help mentioning this-in your review of The Barks Collector you said $1.00 for 32 small pages was a bit inflated, but Elfquest is $1.25 for 36 bigger pages. Not a big difference. I'm sure quality entered into your statement, but give the little guy a break and leave quantity out of it. [NOTE: *Um, ELFQUEST happens to be the little guy, too. Just because something is produced beautifully doesn't mean the publishers are rolling in dough. I respect them because they do give that extra effort. ELFQUEST is not a prozine. It's just as much a fanzine as* THE BARKS COLLECTOR.]

All in all not a very good issue, but still worth it.

Alan Shubert
13 Davis Avenue
Albany, New York 1

Mister Van Hise:

RBCC #146 was the first RBCC I have ever really read, although I've known of its existence for several years; a major blunder on my part.

If future issues of RBCC are of this high quality, you've got a steady customer!

I would like to make a suggestion: Why not do a RBCC special on ELVES in comics and film? I am a devoted elf freak myself, and had the honor to meet Richard and Wendy at the November '78 CREATION CON. They're both wonderful people, and I admire their courage and skill in getting out such a stunning (art and writing) project on what appears to be a very limited budget.

Wendy was one of the most friendly and charming people I have met in the business. She had set up a booth where she was constantly beseiged by a not-so-small knot of people, taking orders for artwork, which she did on the spot. (I ordered two pieces myself, couldn't resist, despite the $10.00 each.)

Answering questions, . . etc. I was amazed at the speed and high quality of which these drawings were produced. I wish more people in the business would devote as much love, time and devotion into their work. Maybe comics done in this manner would be more infrequent, but they would be well worth the wait. I wish them good luck, and the force be with them!

David E. Finky
New York City, NY 10

Dear Jim:

Now that the holiday rush has simmered down somewhat, I finally have time to tell you just how thrilled and pleased Richard and I were with RBCC #146.

First off, I had no idea that mine was the first wrap-around cover RBCC ever had. I only wish it could have been more spectacular. But it really reproduced wonderfully and you chose the PERFECT tone of steel blue coloring. We had a bunch of local fans over one evening, and they all commented that that particular shade of blue made the scene seem even colder. They were all impressed and just delighted.

You laid my article out very well and put all the spot illos in just the exact right places. I was pleased with everything -- the typing, everything. Your special review was the capper, however. It put a lump in my throat, because yes, dammit, we DO work hard on this project. We care for it very deeply and there is, as yet, very little monetary recompense for us. . . or for any independent publisher as you must well know. So at the present time, the greatest and most satisfying reward is the wonderful support that you and people like you have been giving us. If our characters seem real to you, if you care about them, then we have succeeded. And if nothing more than that ever comes of *EURQUEST*, we will still feel that success. Pardon me for sounding so sentimental, but this is how Richard and I really feel. It is a truly wondrous thing in this day and age to be able to touch many people at one time. Every piece of fan mail we get is like a friendly clasp of the hand. That's what keeps us going. That and the hope that our elves will end up supporting us comfortably some day...

We enjoyed your article on YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN, a memorable movie indeed, and I was particularly impressed with the profusion of excellent spot illos throughout this piece and others in RBCC #146. Eddings' work is consistently strong and clean, and Blevins shows a superior inking technique, one I envy in fact. I noticed that my centerspread seemed to reproduce "down" a bit from the original, some of the contrast was lost, but it did retain its impact and seemed to even out in a way. Now that I think of it, the one thing really missing from the cover was a hint of vaporous breath coming from the fighters' mouths. That's an addition I'll make to the original when you return it.

In all, RBCC #146 surpassed all our expectations. We thank you deeply.

Best,
Wendy & Richard Pini
Po Box 33
Tauton, MA 02780

Dear Jim:

Thank you for the "Reviewee's Copy" of RBCC #146. It is certainly an interesting twist of policy.

Your "Critique" of *AFTER IMAGE* was most gratifying, although I had hoped it would be worded something like, "After all the superlatives I used in my glowing review of *THE BRUNNER MYSTIQUE* two years ago, it is hard to believe that a publication which is done perfectly could be improved upon, but it has been. This second volume, at a nominal increase in price has increased the overall page count by better than 50% and trebled the number of full color pages to a total of 6!..."

In regards to other matters, the published letter of Bill Warren. He was so totally off-base as to the point(s) of my letter in RBCC #145, that I am surprised you even considered printing it. To a casual reader he may seem to be justified in his remarks, whereas nothing could be further from the truth.

I am enclosing a copy of a letter I just sent to Mr. Warren, and would like to offer it to you for inclusion in RBCC #147:

Dear Mr. Warren,

It is not my intention to merely trade insults with you here, but I feel it necessary to respond on the same level at which I am attacked so that you are able to understand me. Not being a pro, and giving every indication that you have never seen one of my zines on ever having published a fanzine yourself, I would expect an impartial view from you. But instead you choose to argue from a position of complete ignorance, which any reasonable mature person would tell you was sheer folly and concede that you were either trying to pick a fight or bolster your own insecurities.

I will stop short of saying that you are unable to read and comprehend the English language, but you completely missed the point of my letter in RBCC #145. So let me paraphrase what my letter covered and the objections that it raised.

1) The attitude expressed by Mr. Thomas that if I or some other fanzine publisher puts out something that may be of interest to him, I should feel a moral obligation to send him a free copy.

2) The attitude of pros who see my zines, for example at a comic con, spot something of interest to them, and feel they have the God given right to a free copy when everyone else has to pay for theirs.

3) The attitude of the pros who have accepted a copy of one of my zines, and in exchange made a verbal committment to send an LOC, or reciprocate in some other manner, and then never keep their promise.

Roy Thomas is a "fabricator". In that he is a part of a group (i.e. pros) that acts as one of the many detractions in publishing a fanzine.

When I send out an unsolicited zine, I expect nothing in return, and as the general rule shows, I receive nothing in return. I still hope for something, but expect nothing.

Which has led to my current policy; since I expect nothing and in turn receive nothing, I save my money, time and efforts, and simply do not send out any complimentary copies. This simple and direct conclusion, in the end, yields the same results.

Your equating pro = busy, and fan = not busy, is utter stupidity. Most pros would be appalled at the work load that fans carry. We have our own professional activities in addition to our fan activities. Jerry Bails and Gene Reed are prominent examples of fans who carry such a load in addition to their numerous fan activities.

Myself, I have a full-time professional typesetting job with regular overtime demands in addition to a demanding plastic bag business which supplies over 70 West Coast comic and record shops with plastic bags; the publishing, production and distribution of such books as THE BRUNNER MYSTIQUE and AFTER IMAGE; and I still make time to publish, layout, typeset, collate, staple, trim, distribute, and do some writing for two quarterly fanzines; and I still manage to maintain a semblance of correspondence with other fans and the people involved with my various endeavors, and contribute to an apa.

In terms of production quality, the standards for THIS & TA are higher than for RBCC. Among other things each issue is completely typeset as opposed to RBCC's typewritten copy. Granted, we don't have some of the amenities that a larger circulation allows such as larger size, multi and full-color covers, slightly higher quality printing, and a two column format, but we have a damned professional looking zine, and one person went as far as calling it "a scaled down version of AWOOCC".

In conclusion, I frankly don't care if pros are interested in my zines, that was not the point of my original letter. But if they are interested, they'll have to pay for their copies like everyone else or start honoring their verbal committments they make in exchange for copies.

Steven R. Johnson
P.O. Box 1329
Campbell, Ca. 95008

AN INTERVIEW WITH: GEORGE CLAYTON JOHNSON

CONDUCTED BY Dennis Fischer

How does one introduce someone else to George Clayton Johnson? To many Los Angeles *LOGAN'S RUN* fans he is affectionately known as "Crazy George." To others he is science fiction's oldest hippy. Whatever else he may be, George is a science fiction fan and writer.

Among other credits, he has done numerous *TWILIGHT ZONE* episodes, co-authored the bestselling LOGAN'S RUN, and wrote the premiere episode of *STAR TREK*, titled "The Mantrap." (The Mantrap? You know, the one with the incredible salt vampire. Oh.)

Talking to George is an interesting experience just within itself. He is a colorful character as the clothes he tends to wear, which needless to say are quite bright and vibrant. He loves to deal with ideas and concepts, and when he gets excited he starts talking quite rapidly, throwing out consciousness expansion like steam billowing from a boiler on overload. Often this may lead to a minor error in the causal chain of his argument, usually some non-pertinent fact, but for the sake of being punctilious, this has been corrected in notations.

George has a great respect for the people he talks to. He very much wants to get his ideas across, delivering his pearls of hard learned wisdom to listeners as some dogmatic priest might work hard to instruct the flock of his disciples, only it isn't religion that George is pushing, but merely an awareness on the part of the individual of the wonderous world around him.

As Theodore Sturgeon has said, science derives from *scientus* meaning "knowledge." In other words, science fiction is knowledge fiction. George will eagerly demonstrate how a simple deck of cards might contain lost knowledge. He includes kernels of concepts in most of his writing. He expounds ideas, hopes, and dreams that range from logical extensions of today to wildly improbable visions of tomorrow. He immerses himself in endless projects which he works at with religious fervor, but behind the ever-growing stacks of paper on his desk, he is accomplishing a body of work that demands greater notice, attention, and respect.

Recent writing credits include a collection, SCRIPTS AND STORIES WRITTEN FOR THE TWILIGHT ZONE, the short story "Devlin's Dream" (FANTASY & SF, Sept. '78), and the soon to be released SIX GREAT TV SCRIPTS which will include the original first draft of "The Mantrap."

Let's begin with his work for *STAR TREK*.

HOW DID YOU END UP WRITING FOR STAR TREK?

John D.F. Black was the story editor and associate producer on the first season, which consisted of, I think, the first thirteen shows. (He) was a friend of mine, and we had met sitting on a bench outside the offices of a producer named Bert Leonard, who produced a show called ROUTE 66, and we were both young writers. We were both seeking jobs, and we were both making submissions of our ideas there, having what they call a story conference, or, in the business, a meeting. And while waiting for that meeting, John and I became friends. In fact, in those days he was Jack Black, and when I found out his name was John D.F. Black, I said, "Why, that's remarkable. John D.F. Black; it really looks strange."

And before long he rose through natural merit to become the story editor of the series. He told me later that in talking with Gene Roddenberry about getting a job, he had done fifteen minutes on me. And telling John that he (Roddenberry) thought I was a very good writer, especially in that he had seen a television play of mine, MR. NOVAK, and he also had written a MR. NOVAK, and he considered it to be what he called good soap opera. Really good soap opera. So he (John) recommended to Gene that Gene get in touch with me, so Gene did.

At the first meeting it was agreed that I was going to write one of the episodes, but we didn't know which one, so we discussed several ideas. One of the ideas I started on actually was called "Chicago II", but we only got about half finished with it when we found out that Harlan Ellison had been hired to write "Chicago II" under the name "The City On The Edge Of Forever", but basically a similar kind of idea, based upon a larger idea by C.M. Kornbluth called THE SYNDIC, a classic science fiction novel.

THEY MAY HAVE ALSO USED THAT IDEA FOR THE EPISODE "A PIECE OF THE ACTION." HOW DID YOU GET STARTED ON "THE MAN TRAP"?

So then the "salt vampire" idea came up. At that time its title was "Damsel with a Dulcimer". It was retitled by Gene to make it "The Man Trap." I received the go ahead from Gene on the idea of the shape changer. Then I went home and worked hard for about thirty days, and I came back with a script with which I was very dissatisfied and I was reluctant to show the story editor. I told the story editor, John D.F. Black, what my feelings were, and he asked me then what was I doing, and I started telling him what I was doing, and at a certain point he said, "Oh, you see the problem is that you don't get the creature aboard the ship fast enough. The danger is once the creature gets aboard the ship." And in a minute he said that I could see where my thinking had been wrong. The initial concept of the structure, the very shape which the story took, suddenly collapsed into my mind and I went home and in a matter of just a few days completely rewrote it with his blessing, brought it back, and he liked it immediately. Roddenberry started tinkering with it the minute he got his hands on it, rewrote a number of scenes which I think downgraded the story. He did, I think, the same kind of downgrading and cheapening of John D.F. Black's story, "The Naked Time." The argument he gave me when I accused him of doing this to John D.F. (I was a little hesitant to accuse him of doing it to my own because I didn't want him to think of me as the prima donna author who couldn't stand to have his work altered, 'cause that wasn't the case. But I thought that what he was doing to the work was by and large dumb), so when I saw him doing it to John D.F."s, I said, "Look what you're doing to John D.F.'s script. I liked it better when you started working with it." And he said, "Well, you see the sponsors, the networks,

*and the studio, and the fact we have all these actors, very expensive actors, committed to these various parts, and if we don't have enough footage on any given show, enough of Spock, enough of Kirk, of this in the right kind of mixes. So that's why I took the dialogue out of the mouth of this character and put it into Mr. Spock's mouth, so Mr. Spock would be on the bridge instead of this character." Often times having Mr. Spock say lines or adopt attitudes that he really wouldn't want to adopt. Normally that wouldn't be within the character of this Vulcan, but it worked better that way. Or even giving Spock "Kirk" lines, or Kirk "Spock" lines, depending on whether you wanted the character Kirk, and it did seem that in the first season that there was a real hard push to make Kirk, that is to say William Shatner, the star, the definite star of the picture, and to make Mr. Spock--Leonard Nimoy--a supporting actor to Kirk. So often times if a story, though it were a good story (not more engrossing) didn't have that kind of emphasis, Roddenberry would give it that emphasis. And he used the same argument all along. I personally think that that's a fairly dumb reason, and I think that M*A*S*H shows how flexible a format can be and still maintain the formula. I mean how one can keep the format and change the formula, but if you keep both the format and the formula you make problems for yourself.*

HOW WAS IT WORKING THERE?

Very pleasant working association, except for those dumb cuts, and very thrilling to come onto a set and watch this stuff happening. To watch them take cardboard boxes and spray stucco and create temples and things like that. To watch them literally once a week build a new planet. You know there was a tremendous amount of obvious intelligence going on at all levels, so one had to back away when it got to the question of "was the story the primary thing?" I personally think it is. I think LOGAN'S RUN is an example of what happens. I think the difference between the novel, the movie, and the television series shows what happens. The less story, the less originality in the story, the more predictable the thing is, the simpler the structure is, and the dumber it gets. And slowly something can be degraded. I think the key to keeping something exciting is the story line. That's why I've become, in my lifetime, a specialist in storyline. Some people think, "Well, I'm good at atmosphere," or "I am good at the script" or "I am good at story conferences, figuring out how it all goes." My skill is the storyline.

If you were to take a story in a paper clip, let's say, and you straighten the paper clip out (and you try to make the paper clip represent the story), and you're reading along and the plot changes, so you put a bend in the paper clip, and then it goes off that way, so you put another plot thing, and then it goes on straight for a little while, rising like this, then you put another little bend in it. By the time that you have bent your little paper clip up, it forms a little shape. Good stories have the quality that their shape is not the end of their story's shape. So distinctive are these shapes, that one can begin to deal in these shapes and see what that invisible bent-up wire form is that holds up all those different elements together. That thing, whatever it is, I call it a storyline, and in television there is a lot of dealing with storyline. They want you to write out an outline first that usually shows what you call the action-line. It's not the philosophical changes that cause a character to change, but what physically we can see visually.

Many of the people who are working in television (and its deepest heart) are writing for a tv set deliberately in their minds. That is a black and white set; it's about eight or nine or ten years old; that has a very poor antenna; that is out of focus; that has a limited field; that has very poor contrast; and that renders only the most prosaic or the most abstract of images. Nonetheless, on such a set you can tell the difference between Telly Savalas and the other crook. Now that ability to tell the difference between Telly Savalas and the other crook is like the bottom line, and if you cannot make that absolutely clear by everybody's actions and gestures and dress and demeanor and comportment and everything, and if there's any blurring of that, that poor viewer who is looking at that thing through a nine or ten-year-old set is not getting the essential information to see what the hell is going on. So in tends to be, by those self-same practitioners I'm talking about, overacted in that format. So if you want to try and show a more subtle image, you want to try and show by the character's face emotional demeanor. If you want to show what's going on, then you can't leave it up to the actors to show it. The producer will always demand that it be made actor-proof, so that the actor doesn't have to be able to act, just so long as he says those words, the soundtrack, the eartrack will maintain enough strength to keep you understanding what's going on. If you lose the sound you're doomed. The sound is the bottom line and the images should be very simple and stereotyped. Gene Roddenberry makes an image that is much too beautiful, or much more beautiful, than the requirements of the game, and we make stories that are much too complex for the requirements of the game. Have you noticed that every time they rerun it, that each time they rerun it in a cheaper time slot, they have more time for commercials, and so they must take out one more tiny little scene or tiny little chunk?

AND THE STORY STILL HOLDS TOGETHER...

And the story still works. It still works, even after all those cuts, cutting deeper and deeper, taking an hour down to 48 minutes, you'd still read the storyline through it, although you lose the color. You lose sometimes the very essential meaning to it. It becomes too actionized and stops being philosophical, unless you can imbed the philosophy in the action.

The really good screenwriter is the person who can show everything and not tell anything. The really good novelist is the guy who can tell everything and hardly show anything. It's a very strange mixture between skills required to be a novelist or a screenwriter. The screenwriter must show everything; they must make demonstrable by what they do. If he is a bad guy, the novelist can say, "He was an evil man, evil to his heart," and that takes care of it. The screenwriter has to show him coming out of some door kicking some kid over or something, so we must say, "Oh wow, look. From his behavior he must be a mean guy" and draw that conclusion. It tends to simplify things, which is why I think a good book is always better than a good movie. Even a dynamite movie is at best a shallow part of a really good book. Thus the real art form, the deepest art form, is the book form because it allows the reader to make the deepest contribution; therefore it allows the writer to skip the unnecessary detail and go to the heart of the matter, throwing off enough clues that the reader can make assumptions and therefore stay upon some kind of track. Whether two readers get exactly the same image is irrelevant, as long as they are all tracking it and making a complete drama inside of their brains out of what they got from it. So that's a very long and complicated answer to a very simple question.

WHAT CHANGES WERE MADE IN "THE MAN TRAP", AND HOW DO YOU THINK IT AFFECTED THE STORY?

Well, I'll give you just an example. The initial scene of "The Man Trap" as originally conceived was that Leonard McCoy and Captain Kirk are entering the transporter on the ship for the purpose of being beamed down to the planet surface to begin the story.

We've seen a fly through of the ship, because that's the standard format and we've heard the song and we know what show we're watching now, and we cut to the beginning of the first act, and we're not on the bridge, we're approaching this transporter room, walking through hallways, talking and coming into this transporter room. Now the character of Dr. McCoy was a very undefined character. I'd only seen one show of it and was expected as a professional writer to visualize all the surrounding tiles, and each tile together would form this huge, colossal thing we know of as STAR TREK. But we just had one or few of the tiles. One or two or three of the tiles in place, and I had only seen one of them, so on the basis of that one I was expected to dream up my version of STAR TREK. So I had Leonard McCoy saying to Captain Kirk, or Kirk saying something to Leonard McCoy something about, "What's wrong Bones?" and Bones saying, "Look, I just don't like the whole idea of the transporter. I don't care how light any beam is, there's some scatter, and I don't like the idea of atoms of myself being left all over the damn universe. I just don't like that idea. And this thing gives me the creeps. This transporter, and I must tell you that and I'd use it as little as possible." And that sort of dialogue, whereupon Captain Kirk says, "Nonsense" and they show up on the planet surface, whereupon we get some of the background. In place of that scene comes a scene written to replace it where McCoy and the Captain are getting into the transporter. They are talking about some flowers that are being carried to give to this girl whom McCoy is going to be meeting (his old girlfriend) whom he knows is going to be on this planet, this so called Nancy Crater. Now the business about the flowers, for me, is kind of in a certain way very subjectively soft, whereas the business about the transporter is for me objectively hard, and it also makes a promise of future episodes. It says that one of these days we may see a story about a transporter malfunction. It lets you know that there are limitations on the universe. But it was taken out, so that later on when we see the first transporter malfunction story we are not prepared for it. If we are regular viewers, it comes out of the blue to us. Now I felt that was damaging to the entire concept. That little mini-story implanted in just a few lines of dialogue, setting the scene, is superior dramaturgy to the business about, "Oh, I see you need to take along some flowers to get girls to like you. Is that your thing?" It's just a little bit of familiar raillery between two pals.

So when I just recently sold a collection called SIX GREAT TV SCRIPTS to Dell Books for their books for young readers (Laurel Leaf edition books), one of those scripts is "The Man Trap", and I put in the original. The white pages. The one before all the rewrites because I considered it head and shoulders better. Now, so did Harlan Ellison. Harlan did the

same thing. He went out and won a Nebula Award or something for his script. Some damn award that he won...

A HUGO.

A Hugo for his script, see? Now the show on which it was based is extensively part of the data that judgment was based on and part of it, I suppose is that script. Harlan being as indefatigable as he is in fandom, and as vocal as he is, and as central as he is, managed to leak the information of what his script was all about, and managed to spread the seeds of his unhappiness over the changes that had been made in his script, which he considered...which he called, butchery. He is a little bit more outspoken than I am, see? So there is a tendency for there to be a lot of butchery.

I remember having an argument with Gene Roddenberry, the great speckled bird of the universe himself, in which I said to him, "I'm unhappy about this." And he said to me, "Look George, it may well be, and I don't argue with you. You know one hell of a lot more about science fiction than I do." And that is true. This is damn true. So he says, "You know one hell of a lot more about science fiction than I do; however, I know more about this show because I created this show." Whereupon I started to remind him that he created this show by reading 'Captain Future'.

'Captain Future', which was a pulp magazine which ran for indeterminable damned issues, was about this guy called Captain Future, who was in this spaceship, who had this robot called Ortho, I mean an android named Ortho, and a robot named Grag, and a brain in a glass cage called Simon Wright, and Simon was the Mr. Spock character, and these other characters interchangeably played the other aspects of what was a four man ship, which then became the great starship, "Enterprise". But it's basically any single episode of 'Captain Future' is STAR TREK. Read on. Read the other, and if you cannot see that one is the direct lineal descendant of the other, and merely re-thought into a wide screen or video kind of format as opposed to a pulp format. But the act of creation is minimal.

It's like Mr. H.G. Wells did a story about they out there are about to get us and now along comes another guy and writes ANDROMEDA STRAIN, only this time the "they" that are about to get us are not Martians, but germs, microbes of some kind. It's basically still the same story. It's the story of the invasion from outer space. It is the story of the aliens among us. It is the story of this great danger posed by this new element and its potential, and how are we going to deal with it. A completely different tale than the one derived from common root. I think the difference there is greater than the difference between 'Captain Future' and STAR TREK.

Now, that is not to say that STAR TREK is not an incredibly important event in that it took to viewers, people who do not read, but have viewed. There are three classes of people in this literary firmament that we inhabit here; one of them are people who have written; then there are people who have read but not written; then there are people who have viewed and not read--and this viewing audience, basically sight-oriented people until rock'n'roll came along, which made them just like the rest of us--all ear oriented people--those people have their major input science fiction-wise in things like CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND, STAR WARS, STAR TREK, SPACE: 1999 (which is STAR TREK revisited) or LOGAN'S RUN which is STAR TREK revisited in terms of the television look of it. We can't tell the difference. We can't tell the difference between the plots. They're the same little stories. The same little games with infinity. The same little games with immensity. The same little games with inter-penetration of one little reality with another. The same little games of consciousness and its nature. What is the nature of consciousness? All those ideas that were done in the first thirteen episodes of STAR TREK have been recapitulated and re-capitulated and recapitulated so that now every hack in Hollywood knows those plots.

No new plots are emerging. Isn't that interesting? No new ones coming along. CLOSE ENCOUNTERS is basically one more variation on THE ANDROMEDA STRAIN which is basically one more variation on H.G. Wells' story. So the seminal work, the creative work, has all been done, and everything else we see around us is just mopping up. And STAR TREK is just an example of the mopping up. That's what it is.

TO BACKTRACK A LITTLE, DIDN'T THEY EVENTUALLY USE THAT LINE WITH McCOY THAT YOU WROTE AND WHICH WAS DISCARDED FROM "MAN TRAP"?

I'm not surprised, but then again it's the case why television writers have been made so aware, and have become so submissive to the idea that television is a medium for selling sales and selling soap, and that all other considerations must pale before that single criteria. Cost per thousand. That's a false idea. It's a false idea promoted by three outfits called ABC, NBC and CBS. The difference between them you cannot tell. Unless you see the on read the channel number, you cannot tell the difference between them. They are as alike as peas in a pod. There is no diversity in television.

Television is public airwaves, and it is definitely being used as a medium for selling soap, and, in the guise of a medium for selling soap, it is a commercial user. If something is being done for the first time, it is not commercial. Commercial by definition means ordinary, familiar, almost trite, almost cliche'. Then it becomes commercial. Then it can appeal to the broadest mass of men, rather than a very narrow segment of them.

We in science fiction and fandom are a very narrow segment of that really, really wide mass. I, myself, am a specialist in reaching the big numbers, rather than the little numbers. That's why my LOGAN'S RUN, with William F. Nolan, reached the movies, reached television, because all those considerations were taken into consideration before starting. Now novelists put just as much time writing a book you could never make a movie out of. They don't think of the movie potential of it, or they could never be degraded finally from a movie into a tv series. When I say "degraded" that's only because of the mentality of the people who own it and are running it right now, but once it is truly being used as it should be, as video, once we begin to utilize the potential of video (not for doing commercials, selling soap, or making station breaks, but for making drama and making other kinds of consciousness expanders), then it's going to be a whole new game.

We're in the primitive stages of video right now. The initial stages. Are you aware that--what 28? 30 years?--that the whole business of video is less than 40 years old? Less than 40 years old. That's less than one lifetime. The world of man as we know it. The world of civilized man, is only about 50 lifetimes long. Some people refer to it as maybe as many as 80 lifetimes, but 50 lifetimes. So about half of a lifetime is all that video has been around out of those 80 lifetimes. Out of those 28-30 years it has become ingrained as a concept in the minds of a small portion of the globe. But once it's penetrated. Once everybody really learns the language, and once the power over it has been wrested out of the hands of the three networks (who are bad managers of those airwaves) then it can be devoted to consciousness expanding. This is not to say the airwaves are not consciousness expanding. They are. By their very nature they have enlightened us. They have taught us how to watch for the crooks. They have taught us how to spot the lie.

We have learned to look at that Bayer commercial and see that it may be true about aspirin, but why do they keep insisting that Bayer aspirin is the only kind, or equating the word aspirin with Bayer? And, then again, do they have the faintest idea of what the aspirin is doing to make the headaches go away? No. It adds oxygen to the bloodstream in some strange way. Is that its reason? They don't know. Nobody knows why aspirin works, yet they are marketing it with such slick abandon that the implication is that everything is known about aspirin, but nothing is known about aspirin. Nothing is known about 99% of everything. 99% of everything around us we take on faith, or monkey see-monkey do, and it's quite clear that barbarians with almost no consciousness at all can drive cars. So consciousness expansion is going on. There's precious little of it going on in the universe. It could be promoted by video, and human consciousness could be enlarged in a maximum way with video, if video were used for that purpose, but it has not yet had itself pointed in that direction.

Even by the schools. The schools lock up all their video equipment. Most of it is locked up in the library someplace, and you have to go through some thirty-seven forms to check it out of any purpose, and it languishes there, unused. They have had typewriters in commercial practice in the world for thirty years, and the schools are not yet using them as part of the device whereby they're used as tools.

The schools are a joke. The hospitals are a joke. The energy systems are a joke. Government is a joke. The media is a joke. The fairness of everything is a joke. Why? Because there are too many mean, small men at the center of things. That seems to have always been the case, but it's less so. More and more those mean small men are getting grabbed and told, "Wait a minute! Five years ago you accepted a bribe" or "Two years ago you used your power to do this or that wrongfully" or "Now you are going to have to pay a big fine because for years and years you've been doing an illegal practice on people's heads, and you had the power to do it, so you've just done it." More and more of those scoundrels are being brought to heel. More and more we are becoming a nation of many, many sovereign nations within a nation.

I mean, U.S. Steel is a company, is a corporation, is a universe, is a world. It's a state. Every manufacturer - the guy who is making foam rubber mattresses out here in Gardenia - is a small empire. He hires 30, 40, 50, 60 people at a great big factory, and he, himself, is a kingdom, and probably thinks of himself as a kingdom. He's willing to support his kingdomhood to the city's kingdomhood, to the state's kingdomhood, to the nation's kingdomhood, and finally to some kind of global kingdomhood. Our problem is getting that all together so that we can get ourselves on ladders of hierarchy where it's fair.

The trouble is most everything is unfair. And video, that's why my job is making consciousness expanders; that's why I consider myself a maker of consciousness expanders. I'm trying to expand consciousness. I'm using television and science fiction as the tools to reach the largest numbers of people with things which will enlarge a consciousness by presenting you with something that is bigger than you are. A view of things. Whether philosophically, stylistically, or in the form of some other kind of content involving infinity. The infinitely large, the infinitely small, or some other aspect of life which is cosmic and therefore narrows us that there is more here in the universe going on than we are willing to give it credit for. That we almost always try to tie the ordinary things up, and we try to understand them too quickly, and it is only our most contrary minds that finally force us to recognize things like the existence of gravity, or the existence of heredity and the information that is inside of the gene, or, in this case, popular culture or science fiction.

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THE MOST BRILLIANTLY IMAGINATIVE SCIENCE FICTION NOVEL SINCE *2001*...
SOON TO BE A MAJOR MOVIE!

Logan's Run

William F. Nolan & George Clayton Johnson

The importance of popular culture; what people do and did 10 years ago, 15 years ago, 20 years ago, 40 years ago -- is very, very important. Our growing awareness of this through the efforts of science fiction fandom and science fiction conventions is making us more aware. At a certain stage there will be enough awareness that we will reach critical mass. It may be only 5% of the people on this globe all at the same time being awake, but it's not going to take a hell of a lot more than that, and at a certain point we're going to reach critical mass and suddenly consciousness is going to crackle every everywhere. Even those people who have been traditionally asleep and unconscious, because traditionally most of us go through every day unconscious.

HOW CAN SUCH A THING HAPPEN IN A WORLD WHERE ASPIRIN ADVERTISERS CAN MISLEAD PEOPLE INTO THINKING THEIR PRODUCT CAN "CURE" ALL SIZES OF HEADACHES, WHEN THEY CAN CURE NO MORE THAN TWO DOLS OF PAIN. OR, IN OTHER COUNTRIES WHERE THERE ARE NO LAWS REGARDING TRUTH IN ADVERTISING, A SOFT DRINK COMPANY ADVERTISES THEIR PRODUCT AS BEING MEDICALLY BENEFICIAL.

You're right. You've put your finger on the crux of the difficulty. The situation is, however, that we're reaching a period of enlightenment and a period of exposure that the practices of these people are now becoming well enough known, that there's enough disapproval being generated here, that small, but increas-

ingly larger, corrections are being made.

I must tell you that every day on the radio or on the television set, I see an example of spreading enlightenment. Remember when Anwar Sadat threw five Arab nations out of his consortium because they were trying to interfere with his opportunity to be a peace maker? That was heavy news. It is not common to see a person who is, literally to all intents and purposes, a dictator of a vast, vast number of people who live incredibly rich, resourcewise, and have every incentive to stick together in the sense of the OPEC identity - an oil producing nations identity, an Arabian identity - pulling themselves apart for some kind of a global fairness or global understanding or global peace. The fact is every day we're catching another Spiro Agnew, and every day some chairman of some vast committee is suddenly resigning, or some change is taking place. Some dinosaur dies someplace, and the whole system reshuffles. I would be curious to know what the hell the Vice President has been doing. Our president promised us he was going to use this Vice President. Maybe it's the reorganization of the government. Maybe he's laying the groundwork for some of these promises Carter made. Maybe he has been in fact a full partner. Maybe this is what he has been doing.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE EXTENT OF COMIC BOOK-ISHNESS ON TV?

I think that popular culture...I think that when they bring back The Lone Ranger as a big budget piece (as they are doing), Sir Low Grade (and Jack Weather) are going to spend a fortune and make a big Lone Ranger, and now they're making the big SUPERMAN. I think all those myths should be taken to the widescreen of the video. I see nothing wrong with a hundred seasons of Wonder Woman, if they can think of some interesting stories that will let her be Superman on a female version of Superman. The mythology is a little slim -- of Wonder Woman -- it's a little skimpy.

WHAT ABOUT VIOLENCE ORIENTED SHOWS LIKE "CHARLIE'S ANGELS" OR "STARSKY AND HUTCH"?

At the moment, it isn't the violence in those things which make them so objectionable, because there is no real violence in there. It's all fake, synthetic, shooting cardboard Indians off cardboard mountains kind of stuff. There's a sense in that media as long as there is quality in the presentation.

DID YOU OR BILL NOLAN ORIGINATE LOGAN'S RUN?

Bill just claimed to have created Logan, the Sandman, but Bill tends to be a little grabby. I don't understand why he is being so grabby. It was a fifty-fifty collaboration; we did it together. We started with nothing but a vague hope we could get something together, and his pretensions that he had the act together in '67 or '68 is utter bullshit. I contributed the word "Sandman". I contributed the palm flower. I mean, if one were to start to decide what elements contitute Logan the Sandman; what is Logan the Sandman? I think that Bill's pretension that he did that is just silly, but I don't understand why he's doing it, because he is a nice guy.

DID YOU WRITE THE BOOK WITH SELLING THE RIGHTS TO GEORGE PAL AS A MOVIE IN MIND?

Well, we don't have the rights. We sold all the rights to the movies as far as that book is MGM, and I don't think MGM is ready to finance another film. But we did write a script, and we may publish that script because there's no reason we cannot publish it as a screenplay--the original LOGAN'S screenplay for those who might be interested in a script format. And there is no reason why his LOGAN'S WORLD or my JESSICA'S RUN could not be made into a film also. There is a chance that the whole myth might be resurrected, but I think not at the moment. I think that at the moment it seems to be sort of a dead issue, and that there are too many people in the universe who've seen the tv version and think it's sort of trashy and not very interesting and too easily understood and not very interesting and too easily understood and not very profound. They don't think it has any philosophical depths because they have not gone back to the original book, which was written as a Pop-Op. A piece of Pop-Op popular culture. It was originally designed as a movie into tv thing, and was written for money. When we sat down to write a science fiction story, we set up a bunch of design criteria for what we wanted to achieve, and then we went up into a motel room and stayed there darn near until we had it finished. We did it together. We did it as a full collaboration with each of us arguing over every word and bilding each other's ideas from the first to the very, very first day, and I just don't understand why Bill has done that. Why in LOGAN'S WORLD he made the claim that he had created Logan the Sandman, 'cause I find that, if you want a one word review of that, bullshit.

WHAT WAS YOUR REACTION TO LOGAN'S WORLD, AND HOW WILL IT FIT INTO JESSICA'S RUN?

Won't hurt a bit. It's two different realities, but so is Tarzan and so is Frankenstein. They're all different realities. ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN is different from THE BLOOD OF FRANKENSTEIN which is different from FRANKENSTEIN which is different from BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN, and each of them has a different element of myth, and somehow it all comes together in your head. Tarzan the Apeman, who sometimes has dark hair, and sometimes is drawn by Russ Manning, and sometimes by Berne Hogarth, and is sometimes played by Johnny Weismuller, sometimes it's a radio concept, and sometimes it's a video concept--with Ron Ely--but it's one thing.

WHAT WAS YOUR REACTION TO LOGAN'S WORLD WITH ITS TRADITIONAL PLOT?

I find the book dumb generally--the book LOGAN'S WORLD--I find it dumb. But the chapter called "Death" is brilliantly written. Brilliantly free associatedly written. I don't think the style of it or the quality of the writing is what makes it dumb, 'cause it's slick and professional. Bill couldn't do anything that wasn't slick and professional. But it is commercial. It's dumb, it has no story line, and it doesn't connect up, and it has no underlying philosophy, and it is basically trivial. That would be my conception.

WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON NOW?

A series of projects...JESSICA'S RUN, I've written an outline for it...a project called FEATURETTE, a show called THE MASK OF FORBIDDEN DESIRE, a series called THE GULFS OF SPACE (the pilot is called "Ezekiel" from the book of the Holy Bible); a book called SIX GREAT TV SCRIPTS for Dell Books; a series that doesn't have a title yet, but basically is another version of THE TWILIGHT ZONE, with three stories: "Deejay's Dream", "The Drum Dancer" and "A Change of Heart". A little short film called FORRY FIUH, which I'm making for Forrest J. Ackerman. A 16mm documentary I'm making about myself called THE SCI-FI FAN. A novelette called "The God". A collection called YOUR MENTAL POWERS EXPANDED. A book of scripts and stories written for THE TWILIGHT ZONE. THE FALL OF THE CITY, a movie and book done with Dennis Etchison. A autobiographical novel called ADVENTURES ON THE PLANET EARTH, and I am producing a film based on a novel by A.E. Van Vogt called SIAN!

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As one can see, George Clayton Johnson is a busy man. In addition to the above mentioned activites, he has run a series of conventions called Claytoncons, done experiments in Futurity, and has been fighting a losing battle against deadlines. He is an intelligent, self-

educated man. Some readers may recognize the title "Damsel with a Dulcimer" to be derived from Samuel Coleridge's "Kubla Kahn," a poem which also mentions a domed city with caverns of ice beneath (sound familiar, LOGAN'S RUN fans?), but George denies any conscious influence. If you want to strike up a conversation with George, just ask him about the philosophy behind a deck of playing cards, and sit back for an hour. George's favorite science fiction writer is A.E. Van Vogt, and I wish him luck on SLAN! That's all folks!

Writing Credits - George Clayton Johnson

OCEAN'S 11 - Dorchester Prod. - Feature film - Story George Clayton Johnson and Jack Golden Russell. Screenplay by Harry Joe Brown. Starring Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr., Peter Lawford, Angie Dickenson, Joey Bishop, Akim Tamiroff and Cesar Romero. Directed by Lewis Milestone.

"Nothing In The Dark" [THE TWILIGHT ZONE] - Story and Teleplay by George Clayton Johnson, Starring Robert Redford, Gladys Cooper, R.G. Armstrong. Directed by Lamont Johnson

"Kick The Can" [THE TWILIGHT ZONE] - Story and Teleplay by George Clayton Johnson, Starring Ernest Truex, Russell Collins, John Marley, Hank Patterson, Earle Hodgins, Marjorie Bennett and Lenore Shanewise. Directed by Lamont Johnson.

"A Penny For Your Thoughts" [THE TWILIGHT ZONE] - Story and Teleplay by George Clayton Johnson. Starring Dick York. Directed by James Sheldon.

"Execution" [THE TWILIGHT ZONE] - Story by George Clayton Johnson, Teleplay by Rod Serling. Starring Albert Salmi, Russell Johnson.

"Dealer's Choice" - Published in Rogue Magazine.

"Drum Dancer" Published in The Hilton Carte Blanche Magazine

"Eleven, The Hard Way" [ROUTE 66] - Story and Teleplay by George Clayton Johnson. Starring Martin Milner, George Maharis, Walter Matthau and Edward Andrews. Directed by William Graham.

LOGAN'S RUN [Novel by William F. Nolan and George Clayton Johnson] Published by The Dial Press, Dell, Corgi, Victor Gollantz, Science Fiction Book Club, Denoel, and A.W. Bruna & Zoon.

"Lullaby And Goodnight" - Published in GAMMA

"Born Of Kings And Angels" [MR. NOVAK] - Story and Teleplay by George Clayton Johnson, Starring James Franciscus and Dean Jagger

"The Birth" - Published in GAMMA.

"The Flame And The Pussycat" [HONEY WEST] - Story and Teleplay by George Clayton Johnson. Starring Anne Francis and John Erickson

"The Prime Mover" [THE TWILIGHT ZONE] - Story by George Clayton Johnson, Teleplay by Charles Beaumont. Starring Dane Clark and Buddy Ebsen.

"The Boy Who Said No" [THE LAW AND MR. JONES] - Story and Teleplay by George Clayton Johnson. Starring James Whitmore. Directed by David Alexander.

"Take Pen In Hand" - Published in PLAYBOY MAGAZINE Article by George Clayton Johnson.

"The Men We Love To Hate" - Published by Rogue Magazine.

"The Man Who Brings Back Yesterday" - Published in Los Angeles Magazine. Article by William F. Nolan and George Clayton Johnson.

"The Poolplayer" [THE TWILIGHT ZONE] - Story and Teleplay by George Clayton Johnson Starring Jack Klugman and Jonathan Winters.

"The Music Kids Make" [KENTUCKY JONES] - Story and Teleplay by George Clayton Johnson. Starring Dennis Weaver, Harry Morgan, Clint Howard

ICARUS MONTGOLFIER WRIGHT - Format Films - Illustrated by Joseph Mugnaini, Story by Ray Bradbury, Screenplay by Ray Bradbury and George Clayton Johnson. Starring the voices of James Whitmore and Ross Martin.

"All Of Us Are Dying" [THE TWILIGHT ZONE] - Story by George Clayton Johnson, Teleplay by Rod Serling, Starring Harry Townes.

"A Bicycle Like A Flame" - Published in Connoisseur's World Magazine

"The Freeway" - Published in MAN AGAINST TOMORROW, from Avon Books.

"The Hornet" - Published in Rogue Magazine and THE FIEND IN YOU from Ballantine

"The Man Trap" [STAR TREK] - Story and Teleplay by George Clayton Johnson. Starring William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, Deforest Kelley, Jeanne Bal and Alfred Ryder. Directed by Marc Daniels.

"The Demon God" [KUNG FU] - Story by George Clayton Johnson. Teleplay by George Clayton Johnson and David Micheal Korn. Starring David Carradine, Rademas Pera, Philip Ahn, Brian Tochi, Victor Sen Yung and Michael Greene. Directed by David Carradine.

Updated list of current GCJ projects: SLAN (storyline) for feature film; The Nevada Game (a series of TV specials); Old Doc (script pilot); The Devil's Picturebook (a TV movie); Tomorrowland (a feature film depicting a hopeful future); The Independents (a novel with Herbert A. Simmons); "The Edge of the World" (a script with John D.F. Black); a novel called A SERIOUS NOVEL; and GULFS OF SPACE (an animated film animating the artwork of Morris Scott Dollens).

WILBER 78

TALES OF THE FORGOTTEN WILDERNESS

"Something Lost, Something Never Found"

BY JAMES VAN HISE

How far back does meaning begin? What is 'Prehistoric'? A time beyond measurement, or merely a time beyond our recall? When was man born? What forms did he shed on his way to modern times? What of his soul? Were his primitive emotions always violent, or was he capable of something infinitely more powerful in the long run than the mere clash of arms? Is love something only civilized men have come to know, or have even man's lowliest ancestors been gripped by the pain for which there is often no surcease?

The Forgotten Wilderness is an era when strange things moved over the land. In which powerful forces came to bear on humanity, such as it was in its pitiful numbers at the dawn of time. Great battles were fought then, with great victories and even greater losses. These tales of this world eons past will chronicle both and will show that even these simple beings of long ago faced the greatest of sorrows which man in his wisdom is still faced with today, and which he will always be faced with so long as humanity reigns in these fragile husks we carry with us as the world winds down.

* * *

The attack came swiftly and was shrouded in darkness, but dark as it was, it was not dim enough to hide the shape of horror.

It moved with a lurching motion, flowing over the ground like black stagnant water as it crawled through the village. It bore no kinship to man, and yet there were men which it obeyed, for reasons only it knew.

It had eyes, many eyes, and yet it remained faceless. Its bulk was massive and it towered above its prey like a quivering mountain which stretched hopelessly toward the dark gulfs from which it was said to have fallen. The moonlight glistened wetly on the leathery unhuman flesh as it trudged onward with deadly certainty.

Raum, the ogre warrior, had only a glimpse of its shifting outline as it rose up and up, obscuring the face of the Moon like an angry cloud. The jungle shuddered with the screams of the dying and the cries of the men who followed a monster.

When Raum had been awakened from a deep sleep, it was the noise of the horror crashing into the village and the anguished scream of its first victim that brought him into startled consciousness. He leaped up, throwing a cloak over his leathern armor. As he ran to the door of his hut he snatched up his sword and buckled it on, drawing it free as he burst into the open. The pale lunar illumination shown on his short dirty tusks as his small feral eyes riveted on the source of the commotion.

People were running everywhere, some with purpose, and others just with purposeless fear. Huts were being ignited, and the cries of the wounded and dying became a dirge which grew louder and louder.

The warriors who were putting the crude hovels to the torch were squat and powerful like Raum himself, but unlike him they wore little protective armor, and in fact their garb was almost non-existent. Apparently they depended on their power and their ferocity as their shield in combat. Ignorant these invaders may have been, but weak they were not. They were entirely hairless and were obviously of a divergent strain of man as they lacked even the vestigal tusks of Raum's ogre tribe. But what they did not lack were muscles. Round blunt heads rested on short necks which were as thickly corded with muscles as their arms. In spite of their appearance, they were not mere savages from the back hills. All of them, and he could see twenty nearby as well as sense many others which were hidden from his sight, but not his hearing, carried broad-swords no less powerful or well crafted than his own.

Raum leaped into the fray like a wounded tiger, striking out of blind hate rather than from any hunting instinct. He parried a downward thrust with his own sword blade and the force of the clash rattled his teeth. He didn't wait for the engaging point to seek a new place of entry, but rather he pulled a dirk from his harness and slashed his opponent across the throat. The shrouding darkness had allowed for no warning of his act and the nude giant fell, the gash spewing gore from the severed jugular.

The ogre turned and ran around the twitching form toward a row of huts where he heard more screaming. He passed these crude empty structures and entered the village square, and it was there that he finally faced the horror.

It towered over him, over everything, almost as if it wished to try and engulf the entire village at once. Its form was a pattern of mania in the mosaic of a commonplace world. Eyes. It was covered with eyes. Staring and unblinking. Grouped in colonies of threes all over its quivering surface. But this wasn't the only hideous feature that characterized it for it was also a mass of nub-like appendages which twitched and waved like cilia, groping and searching sightlessly. Besides the small worm-like appendages, there were also huge pseudopods which stretched and formed to reach out pluck helpless victims from its path. Sometimes it just pulled the bodies apart of those it captured, littering itself with entrails. Other times it pressed the bodies against itself, absorbing them whole while the victim screamed as his flesh seared, hissing in the darkness and finally fading into nonexistence and silence. It was as if they had

been beseiged by a legend, by some dark god who had been called down from nameless gulfs to take his own ritual sacrifices instead of waiting for the ogre-men to bring them to him. The nightmare walked and stumbled, turned in a new direction and oozed over half a dozen huts on its way toward something it sensed. Something it wanted.

Raum knew when he had met his match, but that didn't stop him from trying. He waited until it had passed him and then he ran around behind it, his feet sloshing in the trail of thick noisome slime left in its wake. Raum snatched up a flaming vessel and hurled it at the thing so that the pot of burning oil shattered on the thing's rough hide. The oil splattered and with it stretched the flames which burned up the sinuous curve of its hunching mass in paths which scattered in half a dozen different directions.

Then the horror found its voice. It was like a low wail which began as a rumbling undercurrent, like something heard far away in the ground, but grew in intensity until it reached the level of an inhuman shriek. Piercing and pounding. Driving outwards like a shattering wave of deafening ferocity. The creature's flesh was lambent from the spreading flames. Suddenly it turned with almost blinding speed and fell in upon itself. Its edges curled and flopped inward. There was a sound like a sigh heard from in the sea, and then nothing but a peculiar burning odor remained hanging in the air. The thing unfurled, its thick edges slapping the ground with thunderous force. Then it turned toward Raum. Since it had no front or back, left or right that he could discern, it could be argued as to whether it turned toward him or not. But deep within him the ogre had no question but that it now directed its malevolence toward him alone. The sense which had enabled him to deflect the blows delivered by unseen enemies and sense deadly ambushes, told him that in the heavy darkness the eyes of hell looked down on him and plotted recrimination.

Raum backed up slowly, his sword held out in front of him, its point ready to meet sudden movement. Without turning his head he looked first to the right and then to the left, but he saw nothing he could use to his advantage He knew that this thing would not wait long nor make its move in any small way. Raum was not mistaken.

An appendage snaked out on his left with sudden and deadly speed, but the ogre's blade was no less sudden as it whished down and sliced into the writhing attacker. As his blade bit in, Raum suddenly felt his heart tremble and his mind reel in terror as that special secret sense screamed at him that he had been tricked. He looked up to his right just in time to see another snaking limb hurtling towards him. Not groping, but flying straight at him like a rock hurtled from a catapult. It drove in toward his midsection and then up again. It crashed into him with undiminished intensity and kept on going. He felt himself lifted from the ground, and his body rose higher and higher, faster and faster. The village and the score of fires faded below him, and in the glow of those receding flames he saw clearly outlined a thing that had its origins on a world beyond understanding.

The breath had been driven from his lungs by the force of impact and he found himself tumbling over and over, not upward any longer, but downward. In the unrelieved darkness he could see nothing and could only wait for the sudden shock of impalement that would come when he struck one of the tall trees. Further and further he fell as time passed slowly and agonizingly. As his body twisted and turned in its headlong tumble through the air, he saw the glint of moonlight on a shiny surface, and in that split instant of time when the wrong decision would have meant a doom of shattered bones and instant oblivion, Raum suddenly curled up, bunching his limbs together like a ball which protected his head and reduced the ogre into something which was almost streamlined. He still struck the water with dangerous force.

The instant shock of speed meeting resistance would still have wrenched and crippled a normal man, but the men of the ogre tribe were not like normal men.

Raum felt himself plummeting deep into the river, and his speed was still great enough that if he hit a shallow bottom it would surely crack his spine. But his speed was dimenished by the burden of the deep river, and the bottom remained out of reach. He uncurled himself and slowed still further, though every muscle in his body screamed with the effort. All thoughts of pain were suppressed as he struck out for the surface. In that last moment before he hit, he had only had time to prepare for the impact and had still been too stunned and windless from the blow that sent him skyward to be able to manage an intake of breath. His thoughts swam in confused patterns and blackness pressed in on him with aching certainty. Soon his vision darkened and his arms felt so heavy and ponderous that he couldn't even be sure if he was still moving. There was a ringing in his ears and his head felt like it was being pressed by two massive hands when suddenly there was the slap of cold air against his face and his mouth openned for that starving breath. Turning over on his back he just floated, breathing slowly through his mouth, letting the drifting current and the cool water support his wrenched muscles and sore limbs. It was like being enfolded in a deep bed, or in the comforting embrace of a lovely woman. The ogre's thick, heavy body wanted to sleep and dream of better times, but he fought it off.

Raum kicked slightly and he started to make out the nearest shore and direct himself toward it. The work was slow, and lying helpless in the water with its many hidden preditors about did not make him feel any better about it. Something cool and hard brushed against his leg once, but he didn't move. It slid past him and continued on down the river. Perhaps it had only been a log. Perhaps. The ogre's no way he could have made as much commotion in the water as he did when he landed without disturbing the slumber of something nestled nearby. Raum just floated, stiff, unmoving, and feeling as cold as death. The current carried him slowly down the river as the water lapped against his body and occasionally swirled around him as something else was passed by. Hours later he sensed a change in the water and reaching beneath him he felt ground. He turned over in the shallows and with great effort dragged himself onto the grassy riverbank. His limbs were stiff from the aching aching muscles and the frigid water. A powerful shiver ran through him, but with effort he was able to control it.

He knew that it was no less dangerous here than in the water, but there was nothing to be done about it now. He put his head against the ground and slept.

The sun was high in the sky when he openned his eyes again. The forest was now engulfed in a peaceful, soothing warmth. There were animal sounds in the trees and from time to time there were predatory roars in the distance. The only predator Raum was immediately concerned about was himself.

After refreshing himself in the river which had saved him, he turned and started off toward his village. He knew this land well and didn't need to consult the position of the sun, the shadows, or any distant landmarks to discern the direction. He knew where it was, and just as certainly he knew a cold fear at what he'd find.

He was moving stealthily through the brush a mile from his village when he suddenly stopped. A peculiar noise had drifted down to him from somewhere nearby. It was a soft whimpering which quickly changed into laughter. He crouched down low and slipped into the foliage which stretched off in the direction of the sound. The tittering continued, this time sounding almost seductive in its innocence. It had been obvious to him that the sounds made were human, but whether they were deceptively innocent or genuine

remained to be seen. It was closer now, and Raum moved with even more stealth as he approached the source. His movements were as quiet as any other panther stalking an unknowing quarry, only this panther stalked from curiosity, not from hunger, and the final spring from cover would be either to embrace a friend in relief or confront an enemy in swift and deadly combat.

Raum's sword had been lost when he was battered and hurled into the air the night before, but he still possessed his wits, and his hands were capable of grips which could crack bones and rend sinews. For him, weaponless was not defenseless. Hate could be just as fierce and terrible as the edge of a sword.

Closer he crept, until finally all that stood between him and the source of the curious noises was a thin veil of branches hanging in front of him in spiderwebbing strands. Raum sat and watched, a small smile curling his lips.

Before him was a jungle choked clearing. Visible here and there were the remnants of structures built in another time by a race long since vanished. The chipped stone columns and walls which remained upright seemed to be stretching upward as if to break free of the thick overgrowth which curled over and around them, gripping the hard surfaces with an unyielding tenacity.

Scampering through the jungle dominated landscape, skipping over the broken stone walks, was a girl. She was gathering flowers, humming to herself, and occasionally laughing at something which only she seemed to be able to hear. Garlands of blossoms were attached to her brief skirt and fastened in her hair. The girl was nude to the waist, and her pleated skirt was open to her thighs, revealing a richness of form which was no less gentle and beautiful than what the rest of her displayed. Her name was Ronwil. Raum knew her well. She was his chief's daughter. At seventeen summers she was a feminine wonder. A wellspring of delight with a gift for easy laughter and penetrating insight. The old man had never fathered a son, but he had loved Ronwil as life itself. She was quick and smart, yet gentle and caring. Many times he had seen her comforting one who had lost a husband or a son in battle. Not merely posing as one who cared and supported, but genuinely sharing the grief of a fellow tribesman. Her support brought strength and knitted more closely the bonds which the villagers felt for their leaders. Often he'd see her on some errand in the village, her long brown hair cascading down her back and flowing over her shoulders like a robe. Ronwil's gentle perfect features radiated warmth yet also generated honor and respect one would expect in a chief's daughter. Never a handmaiden, Ronwil had achieved a position of respect more lofty than any woman in the village ever had, and was envied even by many of the burly ogre warriors.

The women of the ogre tribe were as gentle in their beauty as the men were powerful in their ugliness, and yet they were akin to each other. The differences in appearances were never considered beyond being interesting contrasts. They were never cause for prejudice or anguish.

Raum parted the curtain of overgrowth and walked openly into the clearing. Ronwil looked at him quickly, a look of haunted fear showing momentarily in her eyes, but then it passed. The easy smile returned and she trotted over to him.

Ronwil held some longstemmed orange flowers out to him.

"Look Raum, aren't they beautiful?" And she stood there, sparkling in her youthfulness.

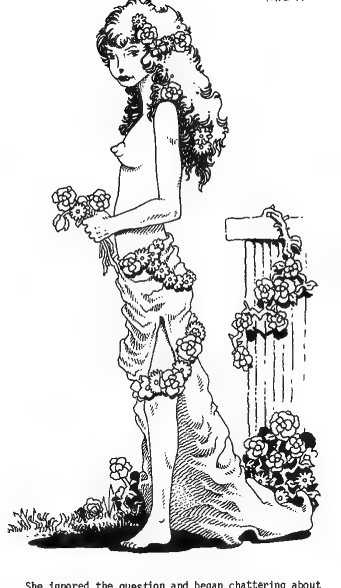
Raum's face broke into a caricature of a grin. His lips twisted, his short tusks protruding. It was as close to a smile as the ogre could come. Ronwil understood and she grinned back at him.

"It's so lovely here," she said, "So peaceful."

"But what of the village?" grunted Raum in reply.

"Oh, they're all right."

"But what about the invaders?" he pressed.



She ignored the question and began chattering about the bright sunshine and the cool jungle glade. The ogre became uneasy over her dodging of this point. He watched her closely as she glided through the clearing and sat on a fallen column, her leg extending seductively from beneath her skirt. She smiled at him beckoningly and giggled.

Raum's blood froze. He moved quickly over to her and took the child's face between his two huge rough hands and stared hard into her eyes.

"The village, Ronwil. Your father. What of them? How did you come to be out here alone?"

She reached up and ran her right index finger down the curve of his face, tracing the rugged outline of his jaw. "Do you like me?" she cooed.

Raum shook her once, violently. Not enough to hurt her, but hard enough to rattle her teeth.

"What happened to the village?" he shouted, and she twisted in his grip. He did not release his hold.

"Why are you hurting me?" she wailed, "Don't you like me?"

"The village," he said once more, and his face moved to within inches of her own, his tusks brushing her lips, his breath hot in the cool morning air.

Ronwil whimpered and closed her eyes. She would say nothing more. This was not the girl he had known. Intelligence no longer turned in her eyes like fiery anger, but had somehow retreated inside like a withering flame.

The ogre released his grip and she relaxed once more. While attempting to penetrate her conscious guard, he had sensed her retreat even more deeply within herself. Her hair hung down over her face in disarray, and some of the strands were stained wet with tears.

Raum was moved, and inside somewhere he felt a pain for the lost mind of a beautiful child. But even that would not stop him from doing what he knew had to be done. He reached out his thick oversized hand and took the slender fingers of Ronwil in his.

"Come," he said gently, although his voice was still the harsh gruffness of the ogres, "I won't leave you here alone. I have a duty to perform," and he hesitated before adding, "and a vow to make."

He led her along quietly and they passed from the clearing into the thicker brush of the surrounding jungle. They made their way down a seldom used path with Raum leading the way and Ronwil following absently along as he led her with a comforting grip on her comparatively tiny hand.

The smell in the air changed from the living odors of the jungle to something else. Something repellant. Ronwil smelled it too and her eyes widened in terror and she struggled against his grip. He ignored her, proceeding even though her struggles became more and more urgent and violent. His pace was not altered in the slightest.

When they emerged into sight of the ruined village she screamed at the image sprawled out before them and then retreated in the only way possible. Her slim form collapsed against Raum's rough, hairy body and she slipped to the ground, unconscious. The ogre warrior bent over and picked her up in his arms to carry her with him. He would not leave her alone.

It was not long before Raum came upon the body of a comrade lying on the ground. The defender had been hideously mutilated and his sword was still gripped in his hand. Raum left it there and went on. He found a sword lying abandoned a few paces on and this he retrieved after slipping Ronwil's unconscious body under his left arm. As he passed what remained of the entrance to the village proper, even he was shaken by what he saw. Raum was a seasoned warrior of wars and other slaughter, and still he had never witnessed such wanton carnage as this.

At the opposite end of the village was a huge path seemingly carved into the jungle itself. In its wake lay the broken bodies of scores of men, women and children. All murdered in the most grotesque fashions their executioners could devise. Some of them had parts of their bodies missing, apparently removed for use in some ritual. The scattered bodies in no way accounted for the entire populace, but Raum knew what had become of the missing. The ogres looked coldly at the wide swath crushed into the jungle.

Raum walked sombrely through the smoldering remains of his life. In all his years he had known nothing else but this place. His meagre needs had always been satisfied here, and when he had fought it had not been just for himself, but for his people, his friends. And now it was all gone. Crumpled, crushed and murdered.

He lowered Ronwil's unconscious form gently to the sward. He brushed her hair from her eyes and looked at her sleeping, untroubled face, for a moment letting his hand linger there, feeling the coolness of her tear stained cheeks. He left her, to do his silent work.

First he gathered what remained of the huts and constructed a huge pile in the center of what was left of the village. With that finished, he went about finding the bodies. It was long hard work. Soul crushing work. After a time, after dragging the remnants of friends, of women, of mutilated children, he felt like his heart would break from the strain. Finally he dropped to his knees in the dirt, unable to continue. Unable even to look again at the result of his work. His fingers clawed at the dirt, scratched at the ground, digging deep furrows which became deeper and deeper as his anger and rage increased. A growl began low in his throat and rose to a roar and then to a bellow which he shouted to the heavens as he threw back his head and shook his huge fists at the sky. "The ogres do not die so easily, not like other men! There will be an accounting and I shall have my revenge!"

He rose to his feet and stood staring at the cloudless sky. His challenge remained unanswered, even by an echo. Not even carrion birds circled for him to vent his rage on. Whatever had passed through here last night had befouled the ground and the dead with something that was too terrible even for the scavengers.

The ogre bent down and struck flint to a brand. He coaxed the flames to life and when the torch was burning well he lit the pyre. The oil he had soaked it with worked to ignite the cremation by mound, and it wasn't long before he had a huge roaring fire going which would consume all that remained of his people. The fire crackled and popped, sending thick acrid smoke curling into the air. The fumes made his eyes sting and thick tears burned his cheeks, mingling with the real tears of grief. His shoulders sagged with the weight of losing all he had ever known or ever expected to know. Suddenly he sensed something and whirled. There was Ronwil, staring into the darting flames, completely transfixed and oblivious to everything else. She began walking forward slowly, one step at a time.

Raum's head was reeling from the rapidity of events. So much had happened in so short a period of time. Things had taken shape and form so quickly. Ogres are not used to such violent changes and disruption in their life patterns. He stood swaying on his feet, his body all but exhausted from pain and suffering. He needed time to think and plan. Must things move so quickly? Happen with such swiftness? Was it so necessary for fate to sweep things away so completely?

It wasn't until he actually saw Ronwil walking into the roaring pyre that his mind accepted what was happening. It wasn't until he saw her flesh baking red like a sunburn that he acted. Raum screamed once and leaped through the air. His tired aching muscles responded to that herculean effort which his mind didn't just ask for but demanded. His shoulder caught her at the waist and hurtled her backwards and away from the blistering inferno. They landed with a hard thud and Raum immediately caught her up in his arms and slapped her once very hard across the face with the back of his hand. She focused on him with eyes that were wild and alarmed, and then she started clawing and biting him, screaming with unrelenting fury.

"My father's in there! Let me go! I want to be with him!"

"Your father isn't there," Raum roared back at her. "He died last night, eaten by that thing from a nightmare. That is what happened, isn't it? I know whose bodies went in there, and his wasn't among them. You saw what happened to him, didn't you? You saw him captured by that monster. You saw him dissolve in its embrace. You saw his flesh run like water until he disappeared inside of it, screaming. You saw that, didn't you? That's why you ran, wasn't it? You saw him die!"

"I saw him!" she wailed, "I saw him, but I didn't want to see him. Not like that. No, I didn't want to see him. I didn't want to. Oh please, I didn't want to." And she collapsed in his arms, moaning and weeping, her voice roaring in agony. Raum pulled her closer to his brawny chest and held her, his left arm supporting her and his right arm caressing her shoulders while she buried her face in his chest. She shook and trembled, suddenly a frightened little girl who had also lost everything she had ever known.

And so they sat there. Weary and defeated, huddled in the light of the funereal pyre. The only survivors of the ancient ogre tribe. It was said that the ogre men never cry, but there comes a time when one has lost so much that there is nothing left to do but cry, and plot revenge.

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Behind them, in the distance, a wisp of smoke drfted up above the horizon, but all that it portended was now part of the past. Raum followed the crushed path before him with intense interest. It stretched into the seemingly limitless distance and its width was fully three times the ogre's height. He led Ronwil by the hand.

The broken foliage that squished beneath their feet was black. Caked with an unearthly residue from a thing that slithered and crawled like nothing born under this bright sun ever had. The path wound into unmeasured remoteness, stretching much further than their own lives seemed to stretch before them now. Raum had brought Ronwil with him because he could see nothing else to do. Her mind had retreated from reality so far that she had become like a helpless child again. The revelation of the night before had been wrenched from her at incredible cost. Leaving her behind now would have been murder. She could hardly take care of herself in this state of mind and would be easy prey for whatever lurked in the jungle. So after equiping himself with suitable arms, they had trudged off together. She didn't even ask where they were going. Dealing with her father's death, facing what had happened to him, had been too much for her, and so she had blocked it out, along with almost everything else.

By mid-afternoon the sun was scortching the earth, and the air was hot and heavy. The sweat flowed down Raum's face and arms in rivulets, but he ignored it. He had a cause, and nothing else mattered. His simple life had been interrupted and shattered forever, and someone, something, would pay for that.

Ronwil complained about the heat, but he ignored her. Finally she just slipped out of her slender skirt and let it fall by the path. Raum didn't even notice. His eyes were on the strange dark road they followed, smashed through the jungle by a menace unheard of before this. If Ronwil knew what lay before them she might even feel fear, if she could understand it in her present state.

Although the jungle usually teemed with life this time of day, they neither saw nor heard anything along the route. It was as if this were a dead corridor, a road to Hell, a purgatory in which they were the only living things. Once they found the withered remains of a huge reptilian predator at the side of path. Whether it had been killed by the thing which made this dark, twisted path, or if it had died from ingesting the black residue which marked the trail could not be certain, but it was obvious why all life avoided this vicinity. It was a region tainted by something which did not belong.

Finally thirst overcame him and he gave in to Ronwil's persistent pleadings when he saw a small pond several yards off to the right of the path. It seemed to be clear enough of the black stain they trod to have escaped any sort of contamination. He used his sword to hack through what few branches obscured their way, and then laying the blade on the turf next to him, he leaned over and splashed water in his face, cleaning his parched lips before slaking his thirst. Pulling a small skin out of his pack, he filled it with water so that he wouldn't have to delay his journey any more than necessary from then on. He had no idea how far the path would lead, but that mattered little to him. If it took another hour, month or year, he would follow it to its fateful conclusion. He had nothing else to do. Nothing else to give him purpose.

Ronwil sampled the water and then, after looking around for lurking predators, she slipped into the shallows and then dived beneath the surface. Her lithe nude form glided through the cool blue water while the sun glinted and sparkled off its surface.

Raum watched her and in his heart he felt joy at being so close to her, and pain at what she had become. In the village she would never have been so immodest in front of any of the men, lest she were inviting their love. But Raum knew that now she acted only in innocence. He stared at her, wishing that they could share love. But now...

She rose up out of the water, walking slowly toward him while the water receded from her. She stopped in front of him and he reached out and touched her leg, caressing it slightly. Ronwil smiled down at him with the guilelessness of a child. He rose up from the ground until he stood face to face with her. His powerful savage frame dwarfing her. Her eyes looked at him through deep pools of innocence. He stepped forward and took her in his arms, cradling her head on his chest and running his hand through her long damp hair. He squeezed her tighter and she responded by putting her arms around him and holding him tightly as well. Then they just stood there. Raum stared into the jungle, seeing things which weren't there, but which nonetheless hung before his eyes. He trembled once and released her, sitting down next to the pond and staring at his reflection mirrored there. The face stared back at him and spoke of other times and other places. It seemed to smile in the way he no longer could. Ronwil stood behind him and watched the face in the water, its frown distorted by the wind rippled surface. A cloud passed in front of the sun and the image in the pool grew dark.

Five days later saw them much further down the dark encrusted trail, but still seemingly no closer to their destination, wherever that might lie. Game avoided this dirty swath in the landscape so that hunting took them far off their route. Raum made sure that he brought down a large animal so that he could put off these delays as much as possible.

They were entering the hills now, but still the path showed no signs of letting up. As they approached another rise, Raum stopped dead in his tracks, staring

ahead with forboding at what was winging black against the afternoon sky. Carrion birds, dozens of them, coming down from the mountains to feast. Raum felt uneasy about this, and yet he couldn't put his finger on exactly what bothered him about this not really unusual sight.

He moved slowly up the hill and stopped when he reached the top, just standing there staring at the unbelievable sight. A thousand questions ran through his head, but he knew he'd probably never learn the answers to any of them. Ronwil came up behind him and screamed when she saw what lay in the valley.

It was the thing. Dead or dying, he couldn't tell which, but it would never raid another village nor churn the life from another soul. What was this creature, and from what inhuman womb did it spring? How did it come to be on this world which had to be across vast gulfs from the region which gave it birth? Did it fall through some rift in the dimensions, or was it pulled through by some witchman's sorcery? How was it that any man had ever gained control of this shambling horror and caused it to do his bidding? Did it finally turn on whoever called himself its master and bring this incredible doom down upon it? A doom which found it stretched and withered on the valley floor with long sharp pikes driven into its hide, nailing it to the earth itself? Even the pikes themselves hinted at sorcerous intent just by their very design. The cross-pieces at their head seemed to form definite patterns as if in imitation of certain cabalistic symbols. It was as if it wasn't the piercing into the creature which harmed it, but the power which these strangely carved totems represented.

Raum walked down into the valley, following the dark smear which led right up to it. All around the earth was scortched white as if from some colossal necromantic conflict, the spots forming shapes like pale starbursts in the soil. In the center of all this sprawled the thing. Next to it stood Raum, his quest ended, but his revenge blunted. He vengeance unfulfilled.

The scavengers had taken flight as soon as he had started down the hill. Man was apparently well known to them, and even these scrawny creatures were preyed upon by the most vicious predator of all. Apparently whatever was in those impaling staffs which conquered the creature also served to neutralize whatever it was which repelled the scavengers from his village and kept its trail one of desolation. High overhead the carrion birds circled, waiting to resume their harvest. But Raum was not yet ready to leave. He walked slowly around the carcass, staring at the thing which had become the bane of his existence in one short night. Its flesh had turned hard and opaque, quite unlike the shimmering leather surface of just a few evenings before. He touched it, running his hand over it, but he could see nothing inside of it. He didn't know what he wanted to see, or even expected to see. The faces of his murdered kinsmen? Perhaps. He wondered where they went when they became part of this thing, or if they were still aware, alive, awake, inside of it when the creature itself was struck down? But it was dead, and none of that conjecture even mattered now. Anything he did to the beast now would be a useless gesture, an impotent thrust as a silent and supine foe.

But what if it wasn't dead? What if it couldn't die as men know death? What if it fell only to rise again like a huge misshapen phoenix? He couldn't be sure, but he would leave nothing to chance. Raum reached into his pouch and pulled two pieces of flint from it. Kneeling down he struck them together and lit the dry grasses all around until the flames were licking hungrily at the drooping husk. Higher the fire roared, catching the dead flesh and searing up and over the thing's dry hide. The flames skipped and danced, whirling around until the entire body was being consumed. The impaling stakes caught fire finally and burned with a great discharge of multicolored sparks.

And then the thing moved. Perhaps it had only been dormant. Maybe held prisoner by the pikes which pinned it to the ground, holding it helpless before death's clutching embrace. But now the stakes had been burned away, and a flaming demon of destruction stood in their stead. It roared fury at the bright sky, seeming as it tried to snuff out the flames which were slowly consuming it. But it was too late. When Raum had set fire to it in his village, it had not had enough time to spread and fully catch, but this time the flames covered every inch, burning away the heavy outer surface and scortching the tender membrane underneath. It rose up, stretching higher and higher, extending its surface further and further in an effort to escape the all encompassing inferno. But it did no good. The more it stretched, the greater a surface it profferred for the flames to consume until finally it collapsed and fell back against the valley floor, twitching and writhing helplessly, a line with agony that was unimaginable to the warrior who watched its death throes.

Raum's brow furrowed and his lips curled into a twisted smile that held no mirth. He threw back his head and roared with harsh laughter which echoed through the valley.

Reaching beneath his cloak, he drew forth the short sword he carried, his backup weapon should his broadsword prove inappropriate. He swung it three times over his head and hurled it into the air. It sailed true to its mark and landed with a sharp thud in the center of the dying alien mass. The shrivelling mass shook as if trying to respond to the impact, and then lay still. The smoke was getting thicker and its hues changed from blue-black to a coppery shade as the thing constricted and shrank into a bubbling pool of flaming protoplasm. The fire burned for a long time, and the ogre stood patiently on the hill, leaning on his broadsword, watching and waiting for any signs that this time wasn't the final destruction of this

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being from beyond imagination.

The sun set slowly in the darkening sky. Long shadows creeped across the ground. But still the ogre stood solemnly on the hill, watching the flames licking at the last bits of alien flesh. The sun was lost behind the mountains when Raum walked around the charred pool which lay steaming in the valley. He poked it with his sword and finally kicked dirt over it. The steam rose into the chill night air, but nothing unearthly remained, save for a blackened mass which clanked against his sword like stone. This time it was really over. He had not expected to live through this confrontation, but then this was not the kind of confrontation he had expected. All that remained now was for he and Ronwil to try and find..Ronwil! He whirled around, trying to pierce the darkness, but nothing stirred in the night here except him. He didn't remember seeing her after he had found the creature, and then he had become preoccupied with the ensuing events. Damn him for a fool! Why didn't he watch her? He should have realized that she wouldn't face this thing after everything she'd witnessed of it. But where could she have gone?

He began running up the hill, reaching the rise where he had left her and then continuing down the other side. The moon was rising now and the jungle was beginning to lighten somewhat. Stopping, he hurled himself to the ground and listened. Nothing. He stood up, frantically trying to pierce the shroud of trees and darkness, but it was useless. He ran back to the top of the hill and stopped, listening, remembering how his voice had echoed up there earlier. Perhaps there was something about this point that could amplify or even detect sounds he might not otherwise discern. All that came to his ears was silence, but there was still a way.

"Ronwil!" he shouted, and it was loud and piercing as only the scream of an ogre can be. His voice echoed from the cliffs like thunder and was hurled into the distance. He waited. Cold sweat stood out all over his body in anticipation, but still he heard nothing. His heart shrank within him and he felt as if the hand of fate was once more moving to blot out his existence. He took a deep breath to shout again when he heard it, very faint and far away. Up toward the other end of the valley. It was one word. A high feminine scream. His name!

The ogre whirled toward the direction of the sound and ran like he had never run before. His short legs were not meant for speed, but he was nonetheless swift in his pursuit. The huge cloak he wore whipped out behind him in the breeze as he crashed through the brush and trampled the thick grasses. Time enough for stealth later. His breath hissed between his teeth and his blood thundered in his ears, but he didn't relax his pace. The distance to the other side of the valley was closing, and just before the moon slipped behind a cloud he saw the glint of its fading light on a sword about a hundred yards distant. He slowed his pace and sought cover. His mind marked the position he had noted and he crept upon it noiselessly, like many of the other nocturnal predators which were abroad now. He glided through the valley like a hush on the breeze. His sword whispered from its sheath into his palm beneath his cloak. He pulled the cape tight against him with his left hand to keep it from fouling on any branches and revealing his position. The sounds he heard no longer required special accoustics to be detectable. They were close by now and were accompanied by visible forms.

The clouds drifted past the moon and light once more flooded the valley. Not twenty yards distant two huge hulking figures crept along in the open. They were slightly taller than the ogre and heavy with thick corded muscles. The two men were completely hairless with low sloping foreheads which dented the

presence of anything but vestigal intelligence. Their only garments were a slender strip of leather wound around their waists which supported a sheathed sword. Raum would have sworn that they were from the same tribe which had ransacked his village. The fact that they were so close to the final resting place of that shapeless monstrosity only confirmed his feelings. But that was less important than the fact that they had kidnapped Ronwil, silently and expertly, while he had been engaged with the slithering destroyer. Whatever their guilt or innocence regarding the other crimes, the present alone assured the final outcome.

The being in the lead drew his sword and looked around, apparently sti ll fearfully recalling the voice he had heard and which had brought forth Ronwil's brief, choked off reply. The two savages squinted their eyes and stared into the night, but Raum stood all but invisible in the thick foliage nearby. The ogre's short sword was gone, sacrificed to the dying demon. But he still had his broadsword and his slender dirk. The broadsword would serve him in the initial pitched battle, while the dirk would be saved for the closer fighting when there'd be no time to swing a sword.

The skulking duo kept staring the night, as if expecting to sight something at any moment. But finely they relaxed their vigil. They approached an outcropping of rock and the one holding Ronwil sat down and turned her towards the second one. Ronwil was kept from screaming by a huge hand clamped over her mouth which almost entirely cut off her breathing. She was weak and could only make small terrified noises when the second one turned towards her and hungrily eyed her graceful nudity. He drew closer and closer, his huge paw reaching out to caress her bulging pulchritude and crush it against him in a heaving embrace. A bellow of rage shattered the horror of the moment and diverted all attention to Raum who had crept to within a dozen paces of the unwilling tryst.

His sword gleamed in the moonlight and his tusks protruded menacingly. The abductors roared and slavered, while Ronwil twisted in her captor's grip so wildly that he needed both hands on her arms to keep her from slipping free. Raum crouched and circled, waiting for the other to strike while their shadows bobbed and weaved in the open valley. Rage boiled up in him, seething in its intensity, burning in its fury. He knew that pleading for her release was useless with creatures such as they. They accepted only complete victory or total defeat, but never surrender. They had what they wanted and they wouldn't give her up until they finished with her and left.

Raum's foe openned with a sharp jab which was swatted aside with an echoing clank of steel on steel. The creature growled low in its throat and hissed its menace. No taunts passed its lips, only animalistic grunts. Raum's blade swung up in a glittering arc which crashed downward and at the last second turned tc the left and slid off the other's blade to bury itself deep in the creature's arm. It howled and slashed wildly, nicking the ogre on the cheek and arm as it sought to solidly penetrate his guard for the death stroke. Blood cascaded down its arm and off its fingers, dripping to the ground. The wound pulsed and flowed while the creature sought an openning before its ebbing strength left it too weak to maintain a strong defense, much less a powerful offense.

Raum leaped forward and jabbed, then swung the blade upward quickly and down again. As it crashed against the creature's weapon, the ogre shoved forward, and while the other's sword arm was fouled on Raum's, the ogre slipped his dirk into his hand and slid it between his opponent's ribs, impaling the heart. It died on its feet. Its wounded left arm had lacked the strength to fend off the quick inside stroke. The creature's eyes rolled back in its head and it collapsed as the ogre jerked his slender knife free of the strategic wound.

As it crashed heavily to the turf, the second creature was on him in a flash, never making a sound as it charged. Ronwil had been tossed aside when it charged. She skidded across the grass, righting herself quickly and looking back at the scene of conflict. The naked warrior had crashed into Raum's waist, hurtling him to the ground. In a grabbed the ogre's wrists and pinned them so that he was helpless to use his weapons. Raum lurched and twisted, but suddenly the beastman darted in his head like a striking serpent and locked his huge jaws on the ogre's neck. Crushing pain nearly blotted out all his other senses as he felt the thing's teeth sink into his throat to rend and tear. Agony overcame every other consideration and forced him to act, giving him the strength he needed to break the other's grip. He arched upward until he freed one of his hands and sent it pounding against his antagonist's skull. He roared and fought while at the same time feeling his lifeblood gushing down his chest from his neck. A piercing thunderous scream sounded in his ears and he felt a hard thud, whereupon the body on top of him relaxed and fell away.

Ronwil stood over him, the sword of the fallen creature in her hand and a fresh dark stain on its blade. He looked over at the second corpse and saw a huge gash in its neck which rent it from side to side and almost bit clear through from the back to the throat.

Raum smiled up at her, but that was all he could do. He tried to rise, but a wave of dizziness made his head swim and he fell back to the ground as his eyes clouded and his brain sank into a black abyss. His vision cleared somewhat as Ronwil bent over him. Her eyes were alive with concern, and her bearing was that of a chief's daughter instead of a little girl. She held the sword like a warrior, bracing herself, sure and steady in her grip.

"You've come back," he croaked, and his throat hurt terribly with the effort. Night seemed to have come to his limbs, for when he attempted movement it was as if they weren't there, as if nothing was there but the constant stinging in his brain. He had seen warriors fall with wounds like this before. Raum couldn't even more to touch his neck, but he knew that it was hopelessly shredded and torn. He had felt the teeth bite deep.

Ronwil caressed his rough cheek and he could feel her touch as if from a great distance.

"Raum, you've done so much for me. You took me when I was lost. You held me when I was frightened and alone, and yet you never took anything from me. I love you, Raum. I always have, and yet if you felt this way too, you never expressed it in word or deed beyond your steady loyalty."

The words echoed in the ogre's ears, and tears came to his eyes. He tried to blink them away and smile. She saw, and she knew. She stroked his face and the aching loneliness tore through her at seeing him fade before her eyes. She had felt his touch, his strength, in support and in defense, but never in love. Dimly a thought came to her about a pool and a wavering reflection. About two powerful arms holding her tightly while he shuddered and trembled before releasing the child who looked at him through innocent eyes.

Tears rolled down her cheeks as she said, "Raum, I'm sorry. I wish you could hold me again. I love you," and her voice broke when she said finally, "What am I to do without you?"

He felt himself falling, retreating, growing smaller. Reality was an image growing dim and almost forgotten, but he saw Ronwil, hazily, and he heard her voice clearly in that moment. He fought for one last vestige of control of his body, and with concentrated effort he answered her question with but a single word.

"Live," he said, and his voice faded and his body relaxed for the last time. The shroud fell and Ronwil collapsed against the body of Raum, her gentle ogre, her tears falling on his cold flesh in the darkness of a night, a million years ago.

BLEVINS '76

CRITIQUE

10. Superb
9. Excellent
8. Very Good
7. Good
6. Fairly Good
5. Fair
4. Tolerable
3. Poor
2. Very Poor
1. Worthless

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JAMES VAN HISE / EDITOR

SABRE - $6.00 + 75¢ postage - 48 pages - Published by Eclipse Enterprises, 01 Delaware Street, Staten Island, N.Y., 10304

SABRE. It was a long time in coming, but it's finally here. Some, however, may wonder if it was worth the wait.

I am inclined to say yes. I cannot, though, quite bring myself to exclaim, "Oh, God, yes! This is great! This is worth the wait! It's worth six bucks! Thank Jesus for this book!" SABRE just isn't that good.

The only real reason for buying it at all is for the great artwork by PAUL GULACY. It easily equals, and most often surpasses the art he did on *MASTER OF KUNG FU*.

The major problem with SABRE is the writing; I have never really read much of DON McGREGOR's Marvel work, but from what little I have read, it's obvious that he is very locked into a preaching trip. He can't settle for writing stories in which subtle moral messages are planted; he has to hit the reader over the head with gobs of contrived, self-conscious metaphors that only get in the way of the story at hand. There's no doubt that underneath it all, McGregor is a fine comic writer. He's highly creative and often original. But he either refuses to, or is unable to write stories that are simple morality plays rather than stories that only serve as stages for his overly-eloquent opinions and concepts.

The actual story and the continuity of the action is quite good. Sabre and the personality therein stem from a youthful life of alienation and delinquency. His traveling and sex companion, MELISSA SIREN, was born in a test tube, and because of that she has no real roots on which to "blame" her present state of being.

The plot involves two villains who are out to kill Sabre; The Overseer, and Blackstar Blood. The reason they want to kill Sabre, I'm presuming, is that he doesn't fit in, he doesn't conform. They lure him to what are obviously the ruins of what was once Disneyland (though it's never called such by name) by attacking a small group of rebels and stashing the survivors at the park. They know Sabre will seek to rescue them.

The Overseer is a highly intriguing character who could have used a little more depth. One background character expresses this opinion about him: "That guy really weirds me out. He lets his body die, right? But he has the medics keep his mind alive, so's he can feel what it's like when your body decays."

Though The Overseer and Blackstar are both flesh and blood humans, many of their henchmen and animals (such as horses) are highly advanced animatronics, and when they are killed, steel rods and circuitry gush from their bodies instead of blood and gore.

Fans of *MASTER OF KUNG FU* will know that Gulacy loves making his characters look like movie actors and celebrities. Sabre looks alternately like Jimi Hendrix, Clint Eastwood and Sean Connery. Blackstar looks somewhat like Kirk Douglas. There's even a minor character who looks strikingly like Woody Allen. Melissa, even though she doesn't look like any actress I'm familiar with, she's probably the sexiest woman to ever appear in comics.

As one looks back over the book after reading it, he sees that except for the trite and caustic chatter and captions, the story is brilliantly laid out and the action flows quite smoothly. Unfortunately, it's the chatter and captions that overwhelm the effect of the book.

Sabre and Melissa are engaged in a mission of some importance, and though they eventually get the job done, they sure as hell take their sweet time about it. They spend most of their time engulfed in self-conscious, psychoanalytical conversation that borders on self-obsession and obmoxiousness; on their way to rescue the rebel prisoners, they take time out to play with animatronic mermaids, talk, engage in sex, talk, dance, and talk some more. They spend page after page discussing the whys and wherefors of relationships, individuality, and social concepts. Most of this would have validity within someone's real, everyday life, and would be fine between friends over a pitcher of beer, but there's no reason to clutter up a 48-page comic story with it. At one point, Melissa says to Sabre as part of a casual exchange, "Oh yes, I can be fragile, and I can be hurt... but it's those that are close to me that inflict the deepest hurt." The sentiment is fine, but who talks that way?

They talk about growing up and whether or not that means conforming to someone else's standards. Jules Feiffer recently dealt with this from a slightly different viewpoint through six installments of his Sunday newspaper strip, and he did it much better. Feiffer deals with many of the same points that McGregor does, but Feiffer does it in a way that is naturally and

inanely poetic (in terms of prose and poetry.)

But what all this chit-chat has to do with Sabre and the matter at hand, I really don't know. I suppose it's meant to flesh out the characters, but it does so at the expense of the story's entertainment value.

Most writers worth their salt learn early on that stories which blatantly sermonize are examples of poor, amateurish writing. Rather than writing stories with characters going on and on, whining about something like a lost love, it is much better to write a story about a person who's lost someone they love. Just tell the story as it happens, providing only the necessary emotional actions and reactions, and let the reader make his own judgments.

McGregor doesn't totally fail at the task of entertaining his readers, but I personally don't find his work to be as fun to read, or as enlightening as Ditko's, for example. Maybe it's because I believe, as Ditko does, that the committing of a crime, no matter how minor, should not go unpunished. While I may agree with much of what McGregor says, he says it in such a clumsy and amateurish way that it's embarrassing to read. I feel embarrassed for McGregor.

McGregor's style of dialogue seems more natural when it simulates an intendly ancient tongue, such as that used in *WAR OF THE WORLDS*. Flowery, pedantic dialogue doesn't seem so ridiculous coming from the mouths of people who exist in a time or place where words like "whence" and "dwell" roll easily off the tongue. McGregor also seems to fare better when his story doesn't take place in the alleys and ashcans of Manhattem, or within an ambience of vigilanty-ism. He isn't quite as tempted to go off on his tangents of relevance.

I think the concept behind the presentation of SABRE, that of providing an alternate outlet for comic creators, is a great one. I don't mind paying six bucks for a book of this type. And even though I found SABRE to be something of a rewardless chore to read, I will gladly make it part of my art collection.

RATING: Art: 10, Story: 4 / MARK BURBEY

THE BOOK OF ELLISON - $5.95 - 192 pages (5½ x 8¼) - Published by Algol Press, P.O. Box 4175, New York, N.Y. 10017

Over the past several years I've become more and more enamored by the writing of Harlan Ellison, from his fascinating polemical columns in *THE LOS ANGELES FREE PRESS* in the late sixties and early seventies, to his imaginative excursions into fantasy and science fiction. Ellison has consistently displayed his mastery over not only the unusual, but the thoughtful as well. Never read Ellison, you say? Then grab (as in buy) a copy of DEATHBIRD STORIES and read "Basilisk" and "The Whimper of Whipped Dogs". You'll never be the same, I assure you.

THE BOOK OF ELLISON is a collection not only of various articles by Ellison dealing with science fiction, his early experiences in the field, as well as the nature of writing itself, but also a collection which features articles about Harlan Ellison.

The articles about Ellison include pieces by Robert Silverburg, David Gerrold and others, and in the section by Ellison, he also turns around with a piece on Bob Silverburg.

The volume concludes with two early short stories by Ellison (both setting forth some interesting ideas) as well as a non-fiction checklist of his work (which despite the small type spans pages 177-192!)

Most of the material in this book appeared previously in other sources, mostly in the late sixties in ALGOL. But a couple pieces, such as the David Gerrold article and the non-fiction index, appear here for the first time.

The book forms an interesting overview of Ellison's career thus far. The autobiographical sketch Ellison presents of himself is from 1973 and it demonstrates how active a career Ellison has as it is only six years old and yet is very out of date because so much has happened to him since involving stories he's written and awards he has added to his already impressive list.

This book has a lot of fascinating information as well as insights into Ellison and his writing. One of the most interesting sections is in "A TIme For Daring" in which Ellison tells not only how he came to write "Repent Harlequin!,Said the Ticktockman", but the mixed reception it received from his contemporaries. It makes the point regarding staidness within the supposedly forward thinking science fiction community more eloquently than anything I've ever seen.

This is a remarkable book published in honor of a remarkable writer.

RATING 10 / JAMES VAN HISE

SPFX [SPECIAL EFFECTS MAGAZINE] #2 - $4.00 - 32 pages - Published by Ted A. Bohus, 70 West Columbia Ave., Palisades Park, New Jersey 07650

The first issue of this fan produced endeavor came out two years ago and dealt with George Pal's *WAR OF THE WORLDS* (and I hope any of you who were interested bought a copy then because the few remaining copies are fetching ten dollars each from the publishers).

This issue deals with *THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL*. The approaches to this classic genre film are both similar and different from the first issue. Unlike the first issue, there is only one page of full color (the front cover painting) as opposed to the first issue's four pages. Plus, whereas the first issue provided a lot of behind-the-scenes photos and information in its pages, nineteen pages of this issue are taken up by chronological frame blow-ups combined with excerpts from the original script to tell the complete story of the film from beginning to end. I question the importance of this, as interesting as it may be to page through.

There are some behind-the-scenes photos, though, but they span only three pages.

The interviews in this issue are with Robert Wise (the director) and Edmund H. North (the screenwriter). The interviews each span two pages of very reduced type (they'd probably run four pages each in RBCC), and of the two the North interview is the best as it is almost entirely concerned with the film in question and seldom strays from the path of specific discussion.

This issue is best looked upon as a good supplement to the *DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL* issue CINEFANTASTIQUE did in 1976 (Vol. 4 #4). By itself the price seems a bit steep for the slender page count. I believe I may have said the same thing about the first issue, although that one had the benefit of 3 additional pages of full color. I'm sure that all the photos (halftones) brought up their price and they may even have an expensive printer. But the fact remains that it isn't really priced competitively and thus must fall into the more limited realm of a zine for real specialists only, as probably only they would feel that it's really worth the weight.

One extra interesting piece of research does turn up in this issue though in the form of Gort the robot and where the costume resides today. In the mid-fifties it was made over as a creaky, ridiculous looking sci-fi robot (I hate that word, but it fits dammit) for a now forgotten teevee show called "Commander Comet". The customized Gort now lives in a garage in New York, with an air conditioning vent in his belly and everything! Aarrgghh!!

This is a very good zine. I liked it and I'm glad to have it in my collection. But whether you'll want to spring the four bucks for it, I don't know, especially these days when there are *so many* zines vying for our pocket money.

RATING 8 / JAMES VAN HISE

MU: THE LAND THAT NEVER WAS - $1.00 + 25¢ postage - 36 pages (6 3/4 x 10) - Published by Kitchen Sink Enterprises, Box 7, Princeton, Wisconsin 54968

Ahh, George Metzger! His imagination and his artistry are both unique and unusual. From his earliest work in GRAPHIC STORY MAGAZINE ("*Master Tyme and Mobius Trip*") he demonstrated a grasp of the form unheard of in comics at that time. I've always felt that Metzger was one of the few artists working in the underground comix medium who tried to do something with the form, something special rather than the mental masturbation most of the other artists indulged in. Where others were taking the underground comix nowhere, Metzger was taking it somewhere. But times have changed and the form has all but died. The excitement has fled. The innovation along with the daring. Only a few pockets of resistence remain. With all its abundant grotesqueries, I'd still rather have the underground comix as they were eight years ago, for despite the incredibly bad stuff that was being produced, there was some incredibly good stuff too.

MU sort of hearkens back to that time, if only because it was drawn six years ago, languishing unpublished until now. It is not the best Metzger ever published, and hardly the most exciting, but it does provide nice artwork in a tale containing a few diverting ideas.

The story begins in ancient Atlantis as their fleet of giant airships returns from an extended sojourn. Atlantis is a warlike nation which uses its advanced science not only for exploration, but for conquest. Amid intrigue and double dealing, the fleet sets out once more, this time discovering the land of Mu whose science of airships is even more advanced than that of Atlantis. There is more intrigue, and finally murder. Ultimately bizarre secrets are revealed which stretch the vistas of imagination with unexpected revelations leading to the origin of our own moon. Some tricky ideas are postulated regarding the power of belief in the human mind and the story ends on a very metaphysical note.

The art is excellent Metzger, and although the story is very good, it could just as easily have appeared in a Marvel black and white (except for one brief sex scene; the only sex scene I can ever recall Metzger having drawn).

It's interesting and worth checking out.

RATING 8 / JAMES VAN HISE

WITZEND #11 - $4.00 + $1.00 postage - 52 pages - Published by Bill Pearson, Box 13, Derby, Conn. 06418

In its heyday, WITZEND was the place where the pros could do the kind of work they really enjoyed, but couldn't get published by the big companies because of the code. Many of the industry's great creators did work for WITZEND, for God knows how little money. The list reads like a Who's Who of comics: AL WILLIAMSON, WALLY WOOD, STEVE DITKO, FRANK FRAZETTA, VAUGHN BODE, DAN ADKINS, RALPH REESE, REED CRANDALL, JIM STERANKO, GRAY MORROW, JEFF JONES; I could go on.

But for some reason, that has changed. Even WITZEND #10 had a very high level of excellence with contributors like ALEX TOTH, HOWARD CHAYKIN, DICK GIORDANO, MIKE ZECK, WALLY WOOD and JOE STATON.

Perhaps the pros have gotten too busy, which I find kind of hard to believe; there were more color books being published during WITZEND's heyday than there are today. Maybe they're just tired of working for nothing. It's just possible, in these days of rising inflation and other depressions, that financial security supercedes artistic expression.

In and of itself, WITZEND #11 is not a bad fanzine. In comparison with its past achievements, however, it is something of a letdown. But it still has something to offer in the way of entertainment.

There is quite a bit of nice artwork in this issue. I happen to like Bill Pearson's stipple-ridden art. It's not very comic-booky, but maybe that's what I like about it. I don't know whether or not he uses an opaque projector or any other tracing device, but he seems to have a pretty good sense of anatomy.

Wally Wood's talents are represented, but all we get are samplings from his sketchbook, apparently preliminaries for some of his 1984 work. Most of them are blown up and because of this, they look very loose. There are a few nice pieces, though.

My favorite feature is the Nicola Cuti/Mike Zeck strip, THE CARE AND FEEDING OF GEKS. The story is exactly what Charlton would have done had they ever tried to emulate EC. The artwork is great and the story is a lot of fun; slightly on the superficial side as far as characterization goes, but fun.

A strip by Bill Pearson, called THE ENORMOUS SLUG-SUCKERS FROM THE PLANET MARS, is a light, interesting piece in search of an ending. The concept and the treatment is rather original, and though it's ever-so-slightly confusing at points, it manages to maintain reader interest quite well. The ending of the story is practically non-existent, but Pearson's style of cartooning in this strip seems to owe something to Harvey Kurtzman by way of certain effects achieved.

An eight-page strip, written by Bill Pearson and illustrated by Ruben Yandoc, entitled ENCOUNTER is a continuation of a strip started in WITZEND #10 by Dick Giordano, featuring a character named KYM. It is some kind of science-fantasy adventure story, but it was a waste of last issue and the second part continues in the same tradition. Neither strip has any dialogue or text, and the entire concept makes no sense at all. The Yandoc art is some of the nicest in the book, but what's the point?

The remainder of the issue is taken up by an underground filler material that is nice and fun, but I would have much preferred a MR. A strip or at least another long story with a certain degree of creative merit.

I'm not sorry I bought this issue; I just wish it had a little more of the old quality.

Maybe next issue. . .

RATING 6 / MARK BURBEY

HARLAN ELLISON'S CHOCOLATE ALPHABET - $1.25 + 25¢ postage - 28 pages (7 x 10) - Published by Last Gasp Eco-Funnies, Box 212, Berkeley, Calif. 94701

Another underground comic, but this one is indeed quite different. It wasn't often that undergrounds experimented wildly with the form, but when you have a writer who experiments wildly with the form, you can't help but have it happen, although it took us until 1978 to see it. In 1976, Harlan Ellison wrote a story (is that the appropriate word? No it isn't. More like a series of 26 vignettes) called "From A to Z in The Chocolate Alphabet" which appeared in *THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION* and also in his latest hardcover, *STRANGE WINE*. What he did is write one vignette, some long, some short, for every letter in the alphabet. They are strange. They are unusual. They're incredible, and they don't come across at all like they were written in a day and a half! They are

all different. Very different. Some are unusual, while others are downright bizarre. They're great fun and everybody will have different favorites. My favorites are A, D and N.

The picto-fiction style of adaptation (which is the closest approximation of a description of the adaptation that I can come up with) is done by Larry Todd, one of the few giant talents still working in underground comix. The art is some of the best he has ever done. Besides the interior art he provides full color front and back cover paintings.

The inside front and inside back covers contain a forward by Ellison on how this all came to be as well as a brief afterward by Larry Todd.

This is amazing stuff, friends. Don't miss it!

RATING 10 / JAMES VAN HISE

TALES TOO TOUGH FOR TV - 75¢ + 25¢ postage - 12 pages - Published by Jamie Alder, 9970 Liberty Road, Chelsea, Mich. 48118

Despite the title, there are no tales in this whatsoever. There are twelve full page illustrations. The only writing is on the front cover and the inside front cover. The drawings? Well, they're strange, bizarre, even intricate. The only one that I can describe looks like an exploding sun. All the others are just strange patterns with seemingly no purpose or explanation. I guess I should try to describe them...but I can't. They defy any kind of description that wouldn't sound like garbled nonsense. I guess all I can say is that were somebody's mind completely ripped off and blown away on something, this is what they'd probably see. If you're into that kind of bizarre illustration (perhaps it's symbolic?), then maybe you'll like this.

RATING 4 / JAMES VAN HISE

SOFTBOILED - 75¢ - 32 pages (5 3/8 x 8 3/8) - Published by Tom Fisher, 3637 Twilight Dr., Topeka, Kansas 66614

The title and this zine itself is a take-off on the old 1940s detective movies. It's half text and half art with text appearing on the left hand page and the art on the right hand page throughout.

Fisher is a very good cartoonist although he needs to learn just a little bit more about contrast as his very detailed drawings often look cluttered and it's sometimes difficult trying to pick out everything that's in there. Otherwise, his linework is crisp and clean while at the same time being detailed and very stylized in his approach.

The story is okay but in his attempt at satire the plot he uses just comes across as a bit too familiar although he does attempt to make it unusual by inserting a genuine supernatural element.

All in all, it's not a bad effort.

RATING 6 / JAMES VAN HISE

THE DREAM-QUEST OF UNKNOWN KADATH - $10.00 + $1.50 for postage - Six 11 x 15 prints in an illustrated jacket and envelope. Published by Another World Ltd., 3400 N.W. 14 St., Miami, Fla. 33125

"The Dream Quest Of Unknown Kadath" is a story by H.P. Lovecraft, the writer of macabre fantasy. It is the only story by Lovecraft I never got around to reading and so I'll be judging this portfolio purely on its artistic merits, not on whether its veracity of interpretation matches my own.

Although the description of the portfolio mentions six plates, there is also a seventh illustrated plate by Tom Sutton which is an attractive ad for "Another World" publications well drawn in a six panel comic strip format.

The art plates themselves are very surrealistic as they portray scenes of creeping horror as well as glittering fantasy. Two of them involve a galley which sails through space while another portrays a strange winged serpent. All of it is very detailed and carefully rendered Tom Sutton art as only he could portray a subject which he loves.

RATING 9 / JAMES VAN HISE

MINDROT #10 & #11 - $1.50 - 44 pages (5½ x 8½) - Published by David and Kathy Mruz, 3112 Holmes Ave., S. Minneapolis, Minn. 55408

MINDROT is a zine devoted to the study of the animated film.

Issue #10 includes articles on Walter Lantz as well as many columns on miscellaneous aspects of the many forms of animation (i.e. commercials, etc.) There is also a list of the Oscar winning cartoons and the nominees for 1950-65. There's also letters and other information and news features.

Issue #11 features an interview with Jack Hannah in which he discusses many things from his early career including his involvement with the old Donald Duck shorts. There's also a list of the Oscar nominated cartoons from 1956-62 as well as a complete list of every cartoon ever made by MGM!

The artwork appearing in these issues is very good, including some nice art by Jim Jones.

This is one of the best zines around for the fan of the animated cartoon.

RATING 8 / JAMES VAN HISE

ALGOL: THE MAGAZINE ABOUT SCIENCE FICTION #31 & #32 - $2.25 each, subscriptions 4/$8.00 or 8/$14.00 (inquire for overseas rates) - 76 pages - Published by Algol Magazine, P.O. Box 4175, New York, N.Y. 10017

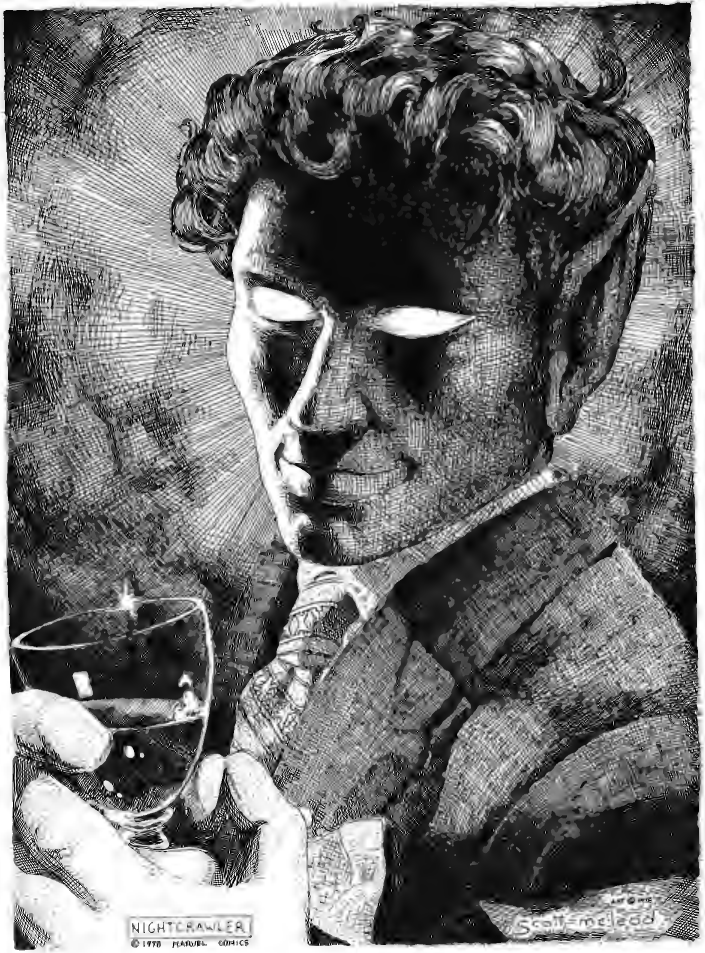
Of all the fanzines ever published about the science fiction field, ALGOL remains the most professional and probably the most respected. The cover of each issue is graced with the names of contributors which reads like a "Who's Who" of the genre.

Issue 31 has an interview with Gordon Dickson, and issue 32 tops it with an interview with Fritz Leiber. Issue 31 contains no less than three different articles by Harlan Ellison; two short ones (one providing the three different opennings he worked up to his never produced screenplay "The Whimper Of Whipped Dog") and a third which discusses some of the things that the other short one deals with, only the third one is a long article which in actuality is the transcript from the resignation speech he made to the Science Fiction Writers of America. Harlan is always interesting, but never moreso than when he's pissed off.

These two issues alone explore the SF genre from many different viewpoints, such as story ideas, how a book was written, what thoughts go through writers heads, etc. They *examine* SF. They probe it. They don't talk about somebody's stories and say, "I liked that one but not this one." They go into depth. Some people have felt they go into too much depth, but that all depends on how much you want to learn about SF, rather than just know about SF.

Lest you think the artistic side is overlooked, issue 32 has an interview with John Schoenherr (the artist of the DUNE calendar, among other things).

RATING 10 / JAMES VAN HISE


NIGHTCRAWLER
© 1978 PEARSON COMICS
scott mccloud

YEEESH!
1313
YANCEY
STREET
CONCEPTUAL PREMISE : DOUGHERTY
ILLUSTRATIVE RENDERING : FUJITAKE
©'78

COMICS COMMENTARY

BY JAMES VAN HISE

A recent comic made me do something I haven't done in ten years. Write a letter to a comic book! The comic? MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE #50. It's crime? Mediocrity! I suppose I should have known what to expect when I bought it since emblazoned on the cover in lettering larger than the title of the book was *"THE THING BATTLES THE THING"*. I expected more. What I got was a comic which was little more than a self-parody of what's wrong with the form today. Dig this, the story is seventeen pages long, complete in one issue, and yet for ten pages the plot does nothing! Absolutely nothing from the full page illo where the present day Thing meets the Thing from 1961 until the other full page illo where the new Thing finishes beating the shit out of the old Thing.(Sounds like some sort of weird transplant doesn't it?) I know, I know. All comics have fight scenes. Some of them are even entertaining, but not all of them resort to the cliche'. What cliche'? The one Marvel has been using for over fifteen years whenever they wanted to have one of their heroes beat up on another. *Scenario: One hero comes upon another hero and hero one misunderstands the circumstances in which he finds hero number two. Before hero number two can explain, hero one starts throwing punches (which in comics is the answer to solving all the major and minor problems of the world). Hero two tries to explain things to hero one inbetween punches and through mashed lips covered with sheerstrips. Finally in frustration hero two says, "Well, if you won't listen, then I'll just carome punches off your cranium for awhile too! Nyahh!!" The imbroglio then continues to its pointless conclusion.* Sound familiar? It should. Now, not all comic book writers use this chestnut, but unfortuneately some do. What really irritated me about it being used this time is that, outside of the fight, the story was a really interesting idea. The present day Thing uses Dr. Doom's time machine to take a formula back to 1961 to change his early self back into a normal human, permanently. Great! But that's as far as it goes. Rather than showing more of the private life of the very bitter Ben Grimm of 1961 (which we saw very little of before *FANTASTIC FOUR #8*), we just get nice drawings of the early Thing, and a long drawn out battle. John Byrne, who's one of the best artists in comics today, did a superb job on the art, accompanied by one of the best inkers in comics, Joe Sinnott. But John's script just sputtered and died. A great idea that missed the mark.

Not everything is missing the mark today though. *THE MICRONAUTS* has turned out to be a real sleeper. Who would have expected a comic book based on a line of toys to be any good? But not only is the art by Michael Golden the best work he's done to date, but the stories are interesting. No pointless fisticuffs, but plenty of action *and* imagination. Although the current story with the Micronauts in our universe isn't as interesting as the stories of the Micronauts in their own universe, it's still pretty unusual. I hope this comic isn't too unusual to succeed since *the bubble-gum brigade* (as we used to call the tykes whose impulse buying can make or break a title) don't seem to take anything which isn't typical super-hero stuff (and so we lost *SHADE, THE CHANGING MAN*).

But speaking of Steve Ditko (*pause while I genuflect*) *BATMAN FAMILY #83* featured an extra nice installment of *The Demon* both pencilled and inked by Mr. D. Ah, the artistry of an innovator at work! No one draws extra-dimensional planes like Ditko does. They may imitate him, but he delivers the genuine article. And those sorcerous battles! It was like stepping back into the pages of *STRANGE TALES* in 1966 right before Ditko left the definitive Dr. Strange behind. Even in those days Ditko's offbeat stuff led a troubled existence as Doctor Strange had to ride piggy back in order to exist. First with the Human Torch and then with Nick Fury, Agent of Shield.

Since I'm on the subject of back them, comics themselves are in trouble today sales-wise, and thus the continuing price spiral. And yet comics sold better in the sixties than they do now fifteen years later, even though there are actually more people (i.e. kids) around now than there were fifteen years ago. So actually the market for sales is bigger today than ever before, and yet comics continue to sell less and less. Does that tell you anything people? Like maybe the publishers need to get their act together? STAR WARS only happens once in a long while so if these publishers expect to be around much longer they have got to try new ideas, and just raising the price and offering nothing more for an incentive just won't work. D.C.'s experiment with the expanded pages on the fifty cent books would have worked. It worked with their dollar comics which offered all new material at a price which was considered staggering for a mass market newsstand comic.

Why is experimentation always shunned in comics? Did you know that the industry as a whole looked askance at Marvel's "bold" idea of putting a barbarian hero in a comic book? I'm talking about Conan, of course.

At the San Diego Con last summer, Charlie Lippincott brought up a point which is obvious but which no one there could answer. Why don't comics advertise themselves? The companies use neither TV, radio, newspapers or other magazines to promote their wares. They just publish them and assume that everyone who might possibly be interested in them will know about them some way. Perhaps clairvoyance? Comics' sales are indeed sliding, and yet the companies do nothing to try and turn that trend around. The Hulk TV show will undoubtedly help the Hulk comic and the Spider-Man show and newspaper strip will add to the character's popularity, but what about the other books? Should new ideas languish and die because they aren't Spidey or the Hulk?

Ah, wot a new year this has been! The re-release of PINOCCHIO and now the new SUPERMAN movie, which I could really wax enthusiastic about if I let myself go, but enough of that. The reaction to the complete AVENGERS TV index last ish was really good, even from the guy who had gone to all the trouble to borrow a friend's back copies of RBCC and xerox the indexes just a week before #146 came out! But that's what hoppins when the boss don't let the readers know what he has up his sleeve. Hear that chief? You suprized some people in more ways than one!

* * * *

LOU MOUGIN--MONAHANS, TEXAS
---ANY HOPES OF SOME DATA ON LARRY IVIE, THE FELLOW WHO DID 'MONSTERS & HEROES' MAGAZINE IN THE LATE '60s???

Hope springs eternal! Ivie has worked as a writer on Captain America, Daredevil, Human Torch and various Marvel SF stuff (1958-1964), Superman and Batman (1965-66), Flash Gordon (King, 1966), Thunder Agents (1965), Harvey SF comics (1963-65), WLJ Heroes (1959), and as an artist on Charlton war comics (1964-65) and stuff for Classics Comics (1961-62). Other miscellaneous work includes research on the pioneer text "Comic Art In America" (1959), MONSTER PARADE, CASTLE OF FRANKENSTEIN (editor in 1963-63), CREEPY (#1), movie ads, SF pulp art (early '60s), two ERB hardcovers in 1962; plus he is purportedly the co-creator of the "Peace" sign, if you believe that.

HOWZABOUT SOME INFO ON THE "GOLDEN AGE" DAREDEVIL???

Anybody who wore a spiked belt like that must have been a daredevil...or have very sore forearms. DD was really Bart Hill, millionaire playboy, and early stories also featured his fiancee Tonia Saunders (Tonia soon disappeared from the strip, probably after being fatally injured during an embrace with DD). DD had no super powers but did use a boomerang as a weapon. He first appeared in SILVER STREAK #6 and then on till #17 (Sept. 1940-Dec. '41) plus DAREDEVIL #1-69 (July '41-Dec. '50) and DOUBLE (a 1941 one-shot reprint comic) as well as text features in most issues of BOY. He made brief cameo appearances in DAREDEVIL #79 & 80 (the title then featured his old sidekicks, the 'Ell Wize Guys). The main DD artists were Don Rico in SILVER STREAK and Charles Biro or Norman Maurer in DAREDEVIL, while Otto Binder wrote most of the strips.

* * *

RICHARD OPP--CINCINNATI, OHIO
---DO YOU KNOW A METHOD OF REMOVING THE MUSTY ODOR FROM OLD COMICS WITHOUT DAMAGING THE PAPER? THIS SMELL REALLY TAKES AWAY FROM THE ENJOYMENT OF MANY OF MY OLDER COMICS.

GASP! You would remove that lovely aroma of rotting paper? That fragrance of decaying woodpulp? Philistine! One of my greatest pleasures is the perverse cheap-thrill I get out of walking into my "library" and breathing in great lungfuls of that musty perfume of ancient funny books! But to remove the smell? I don't know how you'd do it.

---I HAVE A STRANGE COMIC THAT I'M SURE IS A MISTAKE BUT I CAN'T FIND OUT WHAT IT IS. THE COVER IS FOR "STRANGE FANTASY" #9 PUBLISHED BY FARRELL, BUT THE INTERIOR CONSISTS OF 3 DAVEY CROCKETT STRIPS AND ONE SIMON & KIRBY "BOYS RANCH" STRIP.

That is odd! The interior seems to be for a WESTERN TALES #31 or #32 from Harvey. I've heard of STRANGE FANTASY #9 covers being on a BLACK CAT comic (though I don't know if that's a BLACK HAT from the super-heroine stage or horror story stage or which). I have a few comics myself which have one company's comic cover over another company's comic. It's odd that the confusion has never taken place involving one single company's cover and incorrect interior...always two separate companies. (I have a Dell TUROK cover on a Charlton western comic interior.) I would guess that this simply stems from the fact that most all comic books are printed at the Sparta, Illinois World Color Press plant no matter what company is publishing it...and some LIL' mix-up occurring on the lines. But...STRANGE FANTASY #9 is from 1953 while WESTERN TALES #31 or #32 is 1956. There are stranger things on Heaven and Earth, Opp, than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

* * *

IRA BRAD MATETSKY--BALDWIN, NEW YORK
---COULD I HAVE CHARACTER/APPEARANCE INDEX FOR "MORE FUN COMICS"???

Sure, I'll just get out my copy of HOWARD KELTNER'S INDEX TO GOLDEN AGE COMIC BOOKS which gives detailed character indexes for over 180 "Golden Age" titles. I highly recommend it if you're after this sort of data. You'll see Jerry Bails' ads for it.

MORE FUN COMICS #42-107

Radio Squad: #42-50, 52-87 Detective Sgt. Carey: #42-72, Sgt. O'Malley of the Red Coat Patrol: #42, 45-72, Lt. Bob Neal Of Sub 662: #42-63, Wing Brady: #42-52, The Buccaneer: #42-51, Rex Darrell the Flying Fox: #42-51, Magic Crystal of History: #42-50, Cal 'N Alec: #42-44, 46, 47, Marg'ry Daw: #42-46, Gary Hawkes: #42-46, Johnnie Law: #42-44 * (All the previous features began before #42.) Bill Bronson: #43-67, Bulldog Hanlin: #47-55, Handcuff Hank: #47, Boxcar Tourists: #48, King Carter: #49-54, Kit Strong: #51, THE SPECTRE: #52-101,

Capt. Desmo: #53-72, Dr. Fate: #55-98, Congo Bill: #56-67, Lance Larkin: #64-70, Clip Carson: #68-76, Johnny Quick: #73-107, Aquaman #73-107, The Green Arrow: #73-107, Dover & Clover: #94-100, 102-107, Superboy: #101-107

---HOW DID THE OLD GREEN LANTERN LATCH ONTO THAT PERENNIAL HANGER-ON, DOIBY DICKLES? DID DOIBY HAVE ANY POWERS???

I don't know how they first got together, but G.L. first met "Doiby" in ALL-AMERICAN #27 (June '41) in his own 12th appearance; he probably had to take Doiby's cab somewhere or other. Doiby appeared in a G.L.-type costume in a few early episodes, but his only powers were an ability to murder the english language and otherwise act out the part of a sophomoric "Golden Age" comic book sidekick.

* * *

TELEVISION

TV HALL OF FAME!

First off, I'd like to remind you that it's the TV HALL OF FAME whereas in the movie section it's the HALL OF INFAMY. Don't git 'em confused, okay? So nominate the TV shows you liked and the movies you hated. For the TV HALL OF FAME, please be specific. Don't just nominate all the episodes in a series. Pick out one or even two or three or four that you thought were special, just so long as you zero in on something specific and individual.

AL CHRISTENSEN sends me a list of his nominations which include: STAR TREK/"Menagerie" & "City On The Edge Of Forever"; OUTER LIMITS/"Demon With A Glass Hand"; TWILIGHT ZONE/"Nightmare At 20,000 Feet".

"Steel", "It's A Good Life" and "To Serve Man"; THE PRISONER/"The Girl Who Was Death", "Many Happy Returns", and "Schizoid Man"; premiere of BATTLESTAR GALACTICA; and TV movies - NIGHTSTALKER, QUESTOR TAPES, DUEL, CLONEMASTER, DR. STRANGE and THE HOBBIT.

MIKE LARGEY nominates some dandies: The last two episodes of THE PRISONER, any ELLERY QUEEN (try to be more specific, gang) and the 1968 Democratic National Convention (!).

* * *

DAVE SIKULA--WHITTIER CALIFORNIA
---NOW WITH "THE NEW MAVERICK", CAN WE GET A COMPLETE STRUCTURE OF THE MAVERICK FAMILY???

Wal, podnuh, thoah wuz Bret [James Garner], Brother Bart [Jack Kelly], cousin Beau [Roger Moore], pappy Beauregard [James Garner again], nephew Brent [Robert Colbert] and now Ben, son of Beau [Charles Frank]. I just regret that Louisville was deprived of the momentous occasion of "the New Maverick" by the broadcast of the Labor Day Telethon hosted by "Mr. Sincerity" himself, Jerry Lewis, who still hasn't been told that the wet-head-is-dead. The telethon netted the usual umpteen skyillion dollars -- naturally, it could have made more without such an obnoxious M.C. (My kids"... ugh!)

* * *

DART VERNON--RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA
---THERE WAS A CARTOON ONCE UPON A TIME WHICH HAD THESE TWO WHITE BLOBS WHICH WERE PART OF A STRANGE ASSORTMENT OF ALIENS WHO WENT AROUND DOING COSMIC GOOD DEEDS. RING A BELL???

RRRINNNNGGG! That was THE HERCULOIDS, a Hanna-Barbera Production of 9/9/67-9/6/69 (and now in reruns) from that period when Hanna and Barbera still had one final remnant of originality and imagination...it was practically tolerable. The Herculoids were critters on the primitive planet Amzot who helped 3 humans (Zandrow, Tara & Dorno) battle evil stuff. There was Zok the

Lazor dragon, Tundrow the ten legged Rhinoceros who could shoot explosive rocks from his horn, Igoo the Rock-Ape, and your protoplasmic friends, Gloop and Gleep.

Herculoids fans can see these characters in comic strip form in a comic which fandom seems to either have ignored or overlooked; Marvel's THE FANTASTIC WORLD OF HANNA-BARBERA TV STARS. I think that it may have just been cancelled but there were at least three on four issues. You may have passed them over because of the covers of Dynomutt and Funk like that, but inside there were 5 page strips of The Herculoids (drawn in a heavily Wally Wood-influenced style by Will Meugniot and Dave Stevens) as well as a 5 page SPACE GHOST strip drawn by Alex Toth and written by Mark Evanier. The comic was a lot better than the incredibly cluttered covers would make you think. You might even still find some issues still festooned on the comic racks in seven-elevens or places like that.

* * *

MI-MEY

MOVIE HALL OF INFAMY

Okay, first I would like to make a new nomination to go along with my original batch that consisted of CURUCU BEAST OF THE AMAZON, M*A*S*H, *and others. In spite of the fact that I'm one of the world's foremost Irwin Allen fans, and in spite of how fabulous I've thought his last two movies were, his SWARM was, without a doubt, the absolute, relentlessly worst and one of the worst movies ever filmed. I'm ashamed of every actor who appeared in it! Uncle Irwin is no director...he should stick to producing. IK!*

Meanwhile, ED NATCHER *nominates* CANDY *with Marlon Brando, Richard Burton and the rest for its wasted potential.*

LOU MOUGIN *steps up to second one of my nominations,* CURUCU.

DARYL VERNON *has it in for 'B' movies:* WONDER WOMAN *[the Kathy Crosby version, I'm sure],* WON TON TON, THE DOG WHO SAVED HOLLYWOOD, *and* WHAT DID YOU DO IN THE WAR, DADDY?

STEVE MATSUMOTO *picks a popular un-favorite in the* OSCAR.

DAVE SCHELLHASE *nominates a flick which did have wasted potential:* DAMNATION ALLEY.

MIKE LARGEY *names as three of his least favorite moo'm pitchers:* JOURNEY TO THE FAR SIDE OF THE SUN *[Gee, Mike, I allus' thought that'n was kinda' innerstin'],* AIRPORT 197- *[Gee, Mike, I allus' thought they were all sorta' fun] and* GONE WITH THE WIND *[Gee, Mike, I've allus' heard some favorable comments about that'n].*

* * *

LARRY CLEMENTS--AUGUSTA, GEORGIA
---HOW ABOUT A RUSSELL JOHNSON INDEX???

Great! For all us fans of abject mediocrity, the career of Russell Johnson:

1952: FOR MEN ONLY, BACK AT THE FRONT
1953: SEMINOLE, TUMBLEWEED, IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE, LAW AND ORDER, COLUMN SOUTH, THE STAND AT APACHE RIVER
1954: RIDE CLEAR OF DIABLO, JOHNNY DARK, BLACK TUESDAY
1955: MA AND PA KETTLE AT WAIKIKI. THIS ISLAND EARTH MANY RIVERS TO CROSS, STRANGE LADY IN TOWN
1957: COURAGE OF BLACK BEAUTY, THE ATTACK OF THE CRAB MONSTERS
1958: BADMAN'S COUNTRY, THE SPACE CHILDREN, THE SAGA OF HEMP BROWN
1964: A DISTANT TRUMPET
1965: THE GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD

* * *

BOB ROWE--ROCHESTER, NEW YORK
---DO YOU HAVE INDEXES ON SPECIAL EFFECTS MEN? SUCH AS JOHN STEARS (OF "STAR WARS") OR KEN ADAM???

Nope. I don't have any crystallized lists on SFFX guys. Anyone?

From DAVE BATES, the *revised* Clayton Moore movie checklist:

1940: KIT CARSON, SON OF MONTE CRISTO
1941: INTERNATIONAL LADY, TUXEDO JUNCTION
1942: PERILS OF NYOKA [Republic Serial - 15 chapters] *This was reissued as a feature version twice: 1944 - NYOKA & THE LOST SECRETS OF HIPPOCRATES 1948? - NYOKA AND THE TIGERMEN*
1942: BLACK DRAGONS
1946: THE BACHELOR'S DAUGHTER
THE CRIMSON GHOST [Republic Serial, 12 chapter. Reissued as a feature: 1946 - CYCLOTRODE "X"
1947: JESSE JAMES RIDES AGAIN [Republic serial, 13 chapters], ALONG THE OREGON TRAIL
1948: MARSHALL OF AMERILLO; ADVENTURES OF FRANK & JESSE JAMES [Republic serial - 12 chapters] G-MEN NEVER FORGET [Republic serial - 12 chapter re-issued as a feature: 1966 - CODE #645
1949: THE FAR FRONTIER, FRONTIER INVESTIGATOR, SHERIFF OF WICHITA, THE GAY AMIGO, SOUTH OF DEATH VALLEY RIDERS OF THE WHISTLING PINES, MASKED RAIDERS, BANDITS OF EL DORADO, COWBOY & THE INDIANS, THE GHOST OF ZORRO [Republic Serial - 12 chapters] reissued as a feature: 1966 - THE GHOST OF ZORRO
1951: CYCLONE FURY
1952: WIGHT STAGE TO GALVESTON, MUTINY, HAWK OF THE WILD RIVER, BUFFALO BILL IN TOMAHAWK TERRITORY, BARBED WIRE, CAPTIVE OF BILLY THE KID, SON OF GERONIMO, RADAR MEN FROM THE MOON [Republic Serial - 12 chapters] - Reissued as a feature in 1966 as RETIK, THE MOON MENACE

1953: KANSAS PACIFIC, DOWN LAREDO WAY, JUNGLE DRUMS OF AFRICA (Republic Serial - 12 episodes). Reissued as a feature in 1966: U-238 & THE WITCH DOCTOR
1954: THE BLACK DAKOTAS, GUNFIGHTERS OF THE NORTHWEST (Republic Serial - 15 chapters)
1956: THE LONE RANGER
1958: THE LONE RANGER AND THE LOST CITY OF GOLD

At various times some of the Lone Ranger TV segments have been edited together and shown as TV movies, and/or released to some Drive-ins.

The JESSE JAMES RIDES AGAIN serial, and the ADVENTURES OF FRANK & JESSE JAMES serial probably had movie editions, possibly under the original titles, in the 1966-68 period of time.

In THE COWBOY AND THE INDIANS (1949) and THE BLACK DAKOTAS (1954) co-starred Jay Silverheels, the first film being prior to the LONE RANGER tv series stint.

There are likely other unlisted films!

WHO WAS THAT MASKED MAN JOE-BOB?
I DON'T RIGHTLY KNOW ROY-LEE...BUT I THINK THAT INDIAN IS THE FAMOUS JAY SILVERHEELS!
Eddie Edwards

JOHN PETER D'AMANDA---?
---WHAT CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT THE LOVELY 1960 MOVIE "LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS" IN WHICH A PLANT NAMED AUDREY JR. EATS HUMAN FLESH & BLOOD???

I'm not a Roger Corman fan, but this is a genuinely good black comedy that Rog produced and directed in about half-a-week! Also known as THE PASSIONATE PEOPLE EATER, this flick was 70 minutes long, written by Charles Griffith, and starring Jonathan Haze, Jackie Joseph, Mel Welles, Wally Campo, and Jack Nicholson in his second role (his first was 2 years earlier in CRY BABY KILLER).

---DOES THE SUN REALLY SET IN THE EAST IN "THE GREEN BERETS? HOW AND WHY?

For dramatic effect and with great difficulty. All I know is that at the big finish we see the Duke on a beach and sol disappearing into the ocean. Observation: Viet Nam is on the eastern coast of Asia; ergo: the sun is setting in the east. A bit of dramatic license which should possibly be excused except for the fact that it's fashionable to ridicule this movie which I've always thought (speaking strictly on a cinematic and not moral/political level) had some pretty exciting and effective moments.

---WHO DID THE SPVFX FOR "THE GIANT CLAW"???

I would have guessed it was Burr Tilstrom; but, actually, the spvfx ("special visual effects", right gang?) were done by Ben Kline...or at least he did the photography.

---WHO WERE THE CAMEO STARS IN "STAGE DOOR CANTEEN"???

Featured actors Cheryl Walker, William Terry, Marjorie Riordan, McCallister, Margaret Early and Sunset Carson were not some of the cameo stars in this monster 2¼ hour 1943 home-front epic! I know of at least 75 stars who appeared as themselves, making this, in a sense, the biggest "All-Star Cast" of all time. I don't believe T.C. would have space for such a list! Well...so as to not pull a total cop-out, a few of the most prominent names were Katharine Hepburn, Harpo Marx, Gracie Fields, Ralph Bellamy, Helen Hayes, Tallulah Bankhead, Edgar Bergen, Dame May Whitty, Benny Goodman, George Raft, Johnny Weissmuller, etc. etc. and etc!

* * *

JOHN BAKER---DANVILLE, KENTUCKY
---COULD YOU DO AN INDEX OF THE DISNEY ANIMATED FEATURES???

PA=Partial Animation
SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS (1937)
PINOCCHIO (1940)
FANTASIA (1940)
THE RELUCTANT DRAGON (1941)
DUMBO (1941)
BAMBI (1942)
SALUDOS AMIGOS (1943)(PA)
VICTORY THROUGH AIR POWER (1943)(PA)
THE THREE CABALLEROS (1945)(PA)
MAKE MINE MUSIC (1946)
SONG OF THE SOUTH (1946)(PA)
FUN AND FANCY FREE (1947)(PA)
MELODY TIME (1948)(PA)
SO DEAR TO MY HEART (1948)(PA)
ICHABOD AND MR. TOAD (1949)

CINDERELLA [1950]
ALICE IN WONDERLAND [1951]
PETER PAN [1953]
LADY AND THE TRAMP [1955]
SLEEPING BEAUTY [1959]
101 DALMATIONS [1961]
THE SWORD IN THE STONE [1963]
MARY POPPINS [1964](PA)
THE JUNGLE BOOK [1967]
THE ARISTOCATS [1968]
BEDKNOBS AND BROOMSTICKS [1971](PA)
ROBIN HOOD [1973]
THE RESCUERS [1977]

ALFRED HITCHCOCK PRESENTS
Third Season - Part 1
"Based on data submitted by Bob Reed"
Still at 9:30-10:00 Sundays on CBS!

#78 - Oct. 6, 1957 - "THE GLASS EYE"
Julia falls in love with a music hall ventriloquist. She hopes he will love her, not forseeing the terrible consequences.
Cast--Jessica Tandy, Tom Conway, WILLIAM SHATNER, Rosemary Harris, Billy Barty, Nelson Welch

#79 - Oct. 13, 1957 - "THE MAIL ORDER PROPHET"
An investment office clerk risks his entire future on the predictions of an unknown fortune teller. A fellow clerk warns him against risking money on the tips on a mayoralty election, a prize fight and a rise in the stock market.
Cast--E.G. Marshall, Jack Klugman

#80 - Oct. 20, 1957 - "THE PERFECT CRIME"
A criminologist, lauded by the press as "the world's greatest detective" believes that he is incapable of making a mistake in the detection of murder. Then a defense attorney confronts him with evidence that he is responsible for the conviction and death of an innocent man.
Cast--VINCENT PRICE, James Gregory, Gavin Gordon, Marianne Stewart

#81 - Oct. 27, 1957 - "HEART OF GOLD"
A young prison parolee, determined to live down his past, finds a job in a garage. But his attempt to begin a new life is hampered by menacing events.
Cast--Darryl Hickman, Mildred Dunnock, Nehemiah Persoff

#82 - Nov. 3, 1957 - "SILENT WITNESS"
A 14 month old baby girl who is just beginning to talk is the only witness to a murder. Claudia Powell, a college co-ed, is murdered during a baby sitting job and only the child can name the murderer.
Cast--Don Taylor

#83 - Nov. 10, 1957 - "REWARD TO FINDER"
A janitor finds a wallet containing $5,000 and is torn between greed for the money and the moral obligation to return it.
Cast--Oscar Homolka, Jo Van Fleet, Claude Akins

#84 - Nov. 17, 1957 - "ENOUGH ROPE FOR TWO"
Released from prison, a convicted bank robber looks up his two accomplices and sets out for the desert to recover the stolen money
Cast--Steve Hill, Steve Brodie

#85 - Nov. 24, 1957 - "LAST REQUEST"
A district attorney is determined to convict a man who has had a lucrative career as a professional gigolo. The vain lothario's latest escapade led to murder - not only of a woman but her husband as well.
Cast--Harry Guardino, Hugh Marlowe

#86 - Dec. 1, 1957 - "THE YOUNG ONE"
Janice, a beautiful 17 year old who is dissatisfied with her boyfriend, invites Tex into her aunt's very conservative house. Tex is a transient and he discovers that the aunt is dead and he is under suspicion of murder.
Cast--Carol Lynley, Vince Edwards

#87 - Dec. 8, 1957 - "THE DIPLOMATIC CORPSE"
After illegally entering Mexico with their aunt from England, Evan and Janet Wallace are stunned to discover her dead from a heart attack. They decide to return to the U.S. but find the body and the car stolen.
Cast--PETER LORRE

#88 - Dec. 15, 1957 - "THE DEADLY"
Margo Brenner is startled when a repairman she calls attempts to blackmail her. She learns that he has been blackmailing other women in the same neighborhood, but the police tell her she must get concrete evidence from the other victims before they can take any action.
Cast--Phyllis Thaxter

#89 - Dec. 22, 1957 - "MISS PAISLEY'S CAT"
An elderly spinster becomes attached to a stray cat that finds his way to her apartment. She gives him a home and lavishes affection on the animal. But when the cat wanders into the apartment of a bookie in the same building, he informs the spinster he will kill the cat if it shows up again. Then the cat disappears and the bookie is found murdered.
Cast--Dorothy Stickney, Harry Tyler, Fred Graham

#90 - Dec. 29, 1957 - "NIGHT OF THE EXECUTION"
Warren Selvey, an up and coming prosecuting attorney with political ambitions, is urged by his wife to disregard a tramp's confession of murder. Selvey has just convicted another man for the murder to which the tramp confessed.
Cast--Pat Hingle, Russell Collins

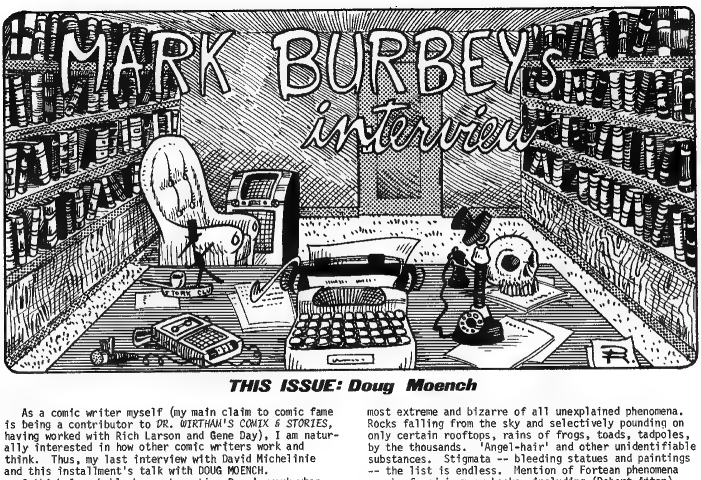
Um, uh, I just found out how long this index will run. Did you know that ALFRED HITCHCOCK PRESENTS ran for 378 episodes? How many fans out there would like to see the index run through to its far-flung conclusion? Let me know, okay? I need to hear from all of you!

And that's where it all ends for this ish, 'til next time. So send your questions on comics, teevee, pulps, movies and stuff, including your suggestions for comic and TV indexes, as well as nominations for the Comic Book Hall of Fame and the Movie Hall of Infamy. I'd also like to hear your comments on the latest episode of PERTWILLABY PAPERS. When sending questions try to include a couple of extra stamps to help out on the research. And try to overlook those drastic fubars when writing to:

KENO DON ROSA - RBCC IC, 4012 DuPont Circle
Sherwood Apts. #401
Louisville, Kentucky 40207

Be seeing you!

Don Rosa



THIS ISSUE: Doug Moench

As a comic writer myself (my main claim to comic fame is being a contributor to *DR. WIRTHAM'S COMIX & STORIES*, having worked with Rich Larson and Gene Day), I am naturally interested in how other comic writers work and think. Thus, my last interview with David Michelinie and this installment's talk with DOUG MOENCH.

I think I probably began to notice Doug's work when a friend turned me on to *MASTER OF KUNG FU* some years back. What I discovered then and still believe to be so today is that *MASTER OF KUNG FU* is a very special series in an industry that is largely mediocre; in many instances, one comic's plotline is indistinguishable and even interchangable with any other. But Doug is such a writer that he is able to make his characters live and breathe with seeming ease. His characters don't just set themselves up as crime fighting martyrs, wholly plastic and shallow; his stories seem to chronicle the lives of real people, with problems the readers can often relate to or at least be sympathetic to. This isn't an entirely new approach to comic writing, but Doug makes it seem so.

Probably my favorite comic series by Doug was *FUTURE HISTORY CHRONICLES*. Doug collaborated with TOM SUTTON and turned out five of the finest comic strips ever done. In fact, I happen to own all the original artwork from the fifth and final story to appear in the series, and three of those pages appear with this interview. As you can see, the artwork is totally unmarred by lettering of any kind, save sound effects; the lettering was done on sheets of tracing paper and photographed separately. We thought it would be more interesting to print the art without it; this also makes it easier to study the technique of doing the art before writing the finished text. Try to imagine adding captions and word balloons to these pages.

During the course of the interview, we talk about a few things that deserve elaboration.

One thing that Doug mentions toward the end of the interview is the Fortean phenomena. I had to admit that I knew nothing of this term, and asked him to explain.

"Fortean phenomena: Charles Fort, author of *THE BOOK OF THE DAMNED* (in paperback from ACE) -- documenting the most extreme and bizarre of all unexplained phenomena. Rocks falling from the sky and selectively pounding on only certain rooftops, rains of frogs, toads, tadpoles, by the thousands. 'Angel-hair' and other unidentifiable substances. Stigmata -- bleeding statues and paintings -- the list is endless. Mention of Fortean phenomena can be found in many books, including (Robert Anton) Wilson's *COSMIC TRIGGER* and Sanderson's *INVESTIGATING THE UNEXPLAINED*. The Turin 'Jesus Shroud' would fit in with the Fortean phenomena."

Doug talks about the house he and his wife live in, and the surrounding property. I don't know how much this interests RBCC readers, but I'm a house lover and it interests me. When Doug first bought the house, Marvel's Bullpen Bulletin page called the house a "mini-mansion" and "the house that Marvel built." About 2½ years ago, I asked Doug about the house in a letter, to which he replied, "My house is neither a 'mansion' nor is it 'mini.' Those are merely examples of Marvel Bullpen Bulletin's 'cuteness.' The house is unusual and unique -- fairly sizable (nine rooms) -- a new house, but designed to look old. Stone walls, stucco, shaker-shingle roofs, lots of wood inside, beams, Colonial touches, huge fireplace, etc. In short, my Dream House, on 5 acres. And costing me a fortune -- in six figures. And yes, the down payment was mostly money I earned from Marvel, but I'll be paying it off for the next 25 years. So, by no means am I rich. I'm just a 'hippie' who makes more money than anyone would think -- and who lives in a house which is beyond the reach of what anyone would imagine I could reach. And the payments are giving me colossal headaches, though the house is definitely worth it."

Another thing that isn't really mentioned is the incredibly brief amount of time it took Doug and TOM SUTTON to do *SEEKER 3000*. Tom once told me it was done in a matter of a week and a half. I asked Doug to explain.

"Yes, *SEEKER 3000* was done in maddeningly short order, apparently due to editorial procrastination. I was given the assignment to do instantly -- completing the concept and finished plot over two days -- and, had it not been for a weekend, it would have been requested overnight. Still, no problem -- the pressure, this time,

FUJITAKE '78

worked to my benefit, I think, and I produced an instant plot with which I was generally very pleased.

"Then nothing for weeks -- might have been a month`-- And TOM SUTTON finally called, saying he'd just been given the plot and orders to finish it, again instantly, in a matter of a very few days. (I think Archie (Goodwin) was somewhat worried about the 'New Baby' and sat on it through a period of uncertainty. Indeed, he finally retyped my entire plot -- almost verbatim, but shortening several sequences by a panel here and a panel there, then using those panels to add an extra short sequence -- either more space battle or more dialogue between Shaw and Jason earlier on, during the 'prison' sequence. I don't recall at this point.)

"Anyway, after Tom did an extremely rushed job (which he felt was substandard and which I felt was miraculous under the circumstances), I had to script the entire book overnight -- not too rough since the plot was so detailed and contained most of the dialogue in fairly finished form. And that was that -- the beginning of a new series which, in the end, became nothing more than a one-shot."

The only thing that changed drastically since this interview was done in the replacing of MIKE PLOOG with JOHN BUSCEMA on the full-color *WEIRDWORLD* magazine. I was nearly outraged when I read that the Ploog pages would not be used because he refused to sign a "work made for hire" agreement. I think Marvel should have said, "Okay, you don't have to sign it. Your beautiful artwork is more important than some goddamned petty clause in some stupid contract." But no, they simply chose to hand the project over to somebody else.

I asked Doug how he felt about the matter, and he said, "I think Buscema's the best in the business -- even if I find others (CORBEN, PLOOG, GULACY, MOEBIUS, et al) more interesting. However, Buscema has said he wants to make *WEIRDWORLD* the best job of his career and he's devoting at least three times his usual care and time to the job -- and when Buscema tries, he's just as interesting as the others I've named. Yes, a shame that Ploog's stuff will not be used -- a bitter shame -- but some who have seen Buscema's preliminary work say it's even better. Whether of not I will agree remains to be seen. In the meantime, Ploog and I just might do something on our own, far from Marvel Comics. . ."

In lieu of the usual photo we might have featured of our interviewee, I suggest you take a peak at the pencil sketch of Doug by Rich Marschall on page 4 in *THE HULK MAGAZINE #11*. There's a little bio of Doug along with it, and *THE HULK* story by Doug is nice, too, even if he is forced to do the character in line with the TV show.

But enough of me. Let's get on with the interview...

(NOTE: The aforementioned *FUTURE HISTORY CHRONICLES* by Moench and Sutton appeared in the following issues of *PLANET OF THE APES* black & white magazines: #12, 15, 17 24 and 29. The pages that are reprinted with this interview appeared in issue #29, on pages 11, 17 and 26. They are copyrighted by the Marvel Comics Group.)

SEEKER 3000 appeared in *MARVEL PREMIER #41*.

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MARK: THE STORY OF HOW YOU GOT INTO WRITING FOR COMICS IS A RATHER UNIQUE ONE; ALMOST LIKE ONE OF THOSE CLICHED "STAR-OVER-NIGHT-IN-HOLLYWOOD" STORIES. ROY THOMAS LURED YOU TO NEW YORK WITH THE PROMISE OF A PROOFREADING JOB AFTER YOU HAD JUST SOLD AN OUTLINE FOR A HARDCOVER BOOK. TO MOST PEOPLE'S THINKING, SELLING A BOOK WOULD BE MUCH MORE PRESTIGIOUS AND IMPORTANT TO ONE'S CAREER THAN WRITING FOR COMIC BOOKS. WHY DID YOU CHOOSE ONE OVER THE OTHER? BY THE WAY, WHAT KIND OF BOOK WAS IT? WAS IT EVER COMPLETED?

DOUG: *Perspective is needed here, I think. Unlike most writers in comics, I seem to have worked my way in backwards. Whereas other writers start in a "faulty" medium like comics and try to work their way "up" and out into novels, films, television and so on, I find that -- without planning it or even being overly conscious of it -- I did almost exactly the reverse. I started out by writing a novel (which sold, incidentally, but was never published -- they went bankrupt and offered to sell the manuscript back to me; I declined, having decided by that time that the novel wasn't worth it, and besides, I'd long since spent the money). Next, I wrote what became a succession of oddball stuff: Prose fiction for men's slick magazines (ostensibly "sex" stories but really autobiographical "hippie humor" pieces written in experimental prose styles); book/movie/record reviews (done mostly for the ulterior motive of obtaining free copies of books and records and passes to Chicago theaters); pin-up copy to accompany girlie photo spreads (the editor of FLING had a profound fixation on mammoth mammaries and I used to call the girls in these photos "Midnight Cows"; much of the copy had to be written in the first person: "Hi, I'm Pussycat Patty and my luscious boobs round out at a tape-busting 48 inches -- wouldn't you just love to lick 'em, Big Boy? . . ."); and non-fiction feature articles for the CHICAGO SUN-TIMES' Sunday supplement magazine, WID-WEST. I also wrote a second self-indulgent novel, SMILE SHARDS, learning much about writing in the process -- a bookength chunk of bizarre madness over which some of my friends still have, but which I never really submitted for any number of quirky reasons. Now, the prose "hippie humor" fiction and the WIDWEST feature articles are pieces I find I still like. Indeed, one article on the effects of terror and violence on the night-life in Chicago always was described as being "darkly chilling, gripping, and gut-wrenching" by the editor, and soon after it was published extra police patrols were stationed on the subways. I was even told that the piece was up for a Chicago Newspaper Guild Award. (Ironic aside: Fellow SUN-TIMES writer, Jerry Green, who later wrote a book about Gesher and the Marvel KISS book, told me that my article was "the best piece I've read in years"). Anyway, somewhere in the midst of all this stuff -- but long after most of it -- I started writing comics. I'd been a comics reader most of my life -- eventually a hard-core fan with the beginning of the AIOFAD series in XERO and the COMIC READER and ALTER-EGO and MASQUERADER and all those other sensawonder pioneer fanzines, then a non-reader, and then born again hard-core fan once more -- and when I saw my friend Don Glut actually selling comic stories as a *p*r*o* to Warren, I cockily decided I could do just the same. (Come to think of it, sheer and brazen cockiness has always been my landmark in tackling any writing task). I wrote five straight 7 or 8 page horror stories in two weeks and fired them blindly over Warren's transom. Then I went on to other things (getting arrested on absurd charges not being the least of them) and promptly forgot about comics. Had the stories been rejected, I'm sure I never would've written another comic book piece for the rest of my life. But lo and behold, a few months later, I found a Warren envelope in my mailbox containing a check for all five stories. No note, no phone call, no nothing. Except the check. And, despite the obscenely low payment rate, I decided then and there: Let's do some more! And I did, of course -- reams of horror stories for Warren as a change of pace from the other stuff I was writing. Somehow and eventually, I found myself really getting into this comics thing, doing the kind of stuff I'd always liked as a reader -- trying out all the oddball storytelling tricks and surrealistic techniques afforded by the comics format. . . and constantly tearing my hair out when every one of the Warren artists (except RICH CORBEN, God love him!) would completely demolish or obfuscate whatever I tried to do in my scripts. Nevertheless, comics writing began consuming an even greater proportion of my output as I added sales to Skywald, Skywald, MONSTER TIMES, the undergrounds, and a few others -- though not to the*

complete exclusion of those projects devoted to the "pure word." (But much to my surprise, I found comics invading even my men's locker magazines, which I began doing funnettis -- comics strips using frame-stills/photos from skin-flicks rather than panels drawn by an artist.) And then ROY THOMAS phoned out of the blue, which finally brings us to your question. A month or so before Roy called, I'd worked up a sample and outline for a proposed coffee table book: A lavishly illustrated and monumental work to be titled THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF HORROR AND THE SUPERNATURAL, containing zillions of pertinent entries and illos and photos from and about horror literature, movies, comics, radio, folklore and superstition, magazines, and even "real life" phenomena. The sample consisted of a half-dozen or so typical entries-- one on DRACULA in general -- one on the DRACULA, the novel by Stoker -- one on Vlad Tepes, the historical "Dracula" -- one on the Hammer film, HORROR OF DRACULA -- one on LEE, CHRISTOPHER -- and so on. Most of these were later converted to magazine articles, following my personal diotum of :Sell everything you write -- except SMILE SHADES, letters to home, and this crazy interview. Anyway, the bundle of outline, proposal, and sample entries was sent off and, as usual, promptly forgotten. Until one morning's mail brought an acceptance and contract from A.S. Barnes, prestigious hardcover publisher. Whoopee! That very afternoon, Roy called. Whoopee again, but also dilemma time. I really liked Chicago. I didn't think I'd like New York. Roy's offer of a job with Marvel was predicated on moving to New York. It was standard at the time: You want to work for Marvel, you gotta work days on staff. Subtle blackmail, holding the writing up as an inducement to snare a proofreader, and Roy made no bones about it. Also, how would I have time to do my ENCYCLOPEDIA if I was writing for Marvel is the final jewel in the "crown" of writing comics; how could I pass this up? On the other hand, I'd just met Debra (now my wife) and how could I leave without seeing how that would turn out? So I called friend and fellow Chicagoan, Russ Heath, for advice; after all, he was a former New Yorker himself. He said: "Go try it out for two weeks -- it won't kill you. Besides, I'm late with this SGT. ROCK story -- you can take it with you on the plane and drop it off at National before you go to Marvel." Which is what I did. Turned out I didn't like New York, except for the book stores and theatres which are the best I've ever seen anywhere -- but the restaurants are overrated and the noise and filth, believe it or not, underrated. (And that's why I'm now in Pennsylvania). But during the two week trial period I was offered all the writing I could handle and much money. The ENCYCLOPEDIA suddenly took on the daunting cast of enormous work (especially calling for zillions of illustrations!) for relatively little money, prestige notwithstanding. And Deb offered to move to New York with me, no strings attached.

And that's the story of that particular turning point, including the direction I turned. On any given day, in certain moods, looking back down a certain select tunnel of hindsight, I may regret my decision for any number of reasons. And yet, I still love comics and always will. I still believe in the intrinsic worth of the medium and, by nature, I will always root for the underdog and long to see the vindication of that which is unjustly scorned. I'm solidly behind comics, pushing for them all the way. And lately, with my comics workload cut back, I've returned to the part-time joy of the "pure word." The major piece in the July '78 issue of OUI Magazine was mine, the editors said it was the best article ever submitted to them; my ego knows no bounds, hallelujah! And three other novel assignment offers. I've done a radio show, and two dramatic record albums. I even had an offer from network television and if I ever get around to finding an agent, who knows?

So maybe I'm on the cusp of turning full circle, and maybe I'll eventually reach a point where comics writing and prose writing can peacefully coexist in a comfortable balance.

I WAS SURPRISED TO SEE YOUR NAME ON SOME OF THOSE MARVEL CLASSICS ADAPTATIONS. IT DIDN'T SEEM RIGHT TO ME: KING OF LIKE WILLIAM GOLDMAN WRITING THE SCREENPLAY FOR A PIPPI LONGSTOCKINGS MOVIE. DO YOU DERIVE ANY PLEASURE AT ALL FROM DOING THESE? DO YOU GET TO PICK BETWEEN WHAT'S AVAILABLE?

Yes, I got to choose, but the options were often dubious. Toward the end, they finally agreed to the CLASSICS titles I'd been suggesting: ARABIAN NIGHTS, ALICE IN WONDERLAND and ROBIN HOOD, the only three I really wanted to do and the three I felt would make the best comics.

As for why I did so many of them. . . well, I didn't have any choice. They were offered as stopgap compensation for series that had been cancelled. I had bills and mortgage payments to meet. I took the work.

MASTER OF KUNG FU STILL SEEMS TO BE YOUR BABY, THE PROJECT YOU REALLY CARE ABOUT. HOW DID YOU FEEL ABOUT JIM CRAIG'S WORKING ON IT? IT SEEMED TO ME LIKE CRAIG WAS IMITATING GULACY IMITATING STERANKO.

I care about all my projects. The innate nature of MOKF dictates a certain kind of care which seems to strike resonances with the older, hard-oriented reader. Deeds. I'd like to do more series like MOKF, but Shang-Chi and crew unfortunately represent a fluke, it seems. Normally, that kind of "serious" strip just doesn't sell.

I really don't understand why so many people feel that Jim Craig was blatantly swiping Gulacy in every panel he drew. He wasn't. Craig was, however, attempting to emulate the storytelling style established by both Starlin and Paul -- the "sequential lawouts" which seem to work so well in depicting the detailed and intricate "ballet" of martial arts movement. The dynamics of such storytelling techniques compliment the dynamics of kung fu action itself. Furthermore, Paul did such a brilliant job of establishing and portraying the various supporting characters that apparently everyone felt they actually knew those characters -- including Jim Craig. And Jim felt -- quite rightly, I think -- that he had to remain faithful to what had been established.

So the Craig-Gulacy formula is a false one, in my opinion, attributable to two artists using the same conspicuous storytelling techniques to depict the same conspicuous characters in the same unconventional (and therefore also conspicuous) storylines. And let's not forget one point: Steranko may have done the most with his "sequential storytelling" -- indeed, he refined it to a powerful, exciting, intricate and almost separate art -- but he wasn't the first. Guys like Krigstein and Eisner go back a long way.

DID YOU WORK WITH JIM CRAIG THE SAME WAY YOU WORKED WITH PAUL GULACY, WITH ALL THE PAGES AND PAGES OF NOTES AND MATNOT?

Yes, I work the same way with every artist. . .except one. The one is good ole Happy Herb Trimpe. So, on GODZILLA and SHOGUN WARRIORS, which are both done by Herb, I write a slightly looser plot in longhand; I then phone Herb and read the plot while he takes notes and asks questions or makes requests. This is actually close to the real "Marvel method" employed by Stan in the old days, and quite frankly, I was afraid of it in the beginning -- afraid Herb would do something I wouldn't be able to write, afraid the pacing would be "warped," afraid there'd be too little room for certain story elements and too much room for others. And, to a very minor degree, this has happened, but by and large, I never should have worried. When you work with an artist as skilled in the mechanics of storytelling as Herb is -- an artist who was trained by Stan to work in this seemingly impossible method -- there are surprisingly few problems and a good deal of spontaneity. In many ways, it's a

frantic dance for the writer to remain on his toes, but it's always, well . . fresh. (Of course, unknown by Herby those longhand plots of mine are actually quite detailed. I simply omit reading any specific speeches or lines of dialogue to him, instead of conveying the gist of the scene so he can render the appropriate actions and facial expressions. Miraculously -- or perhaps via telepathy -- Herb always manages to give me just the right amount of room for the specific dialogue copy I've prepared.)

For all the work of my books, the plots are slightly more detailed and the longhand version is typed and sent in by mail.

WE'LL RETURN TO THIS IN AWHILE, BUT I'D FIRST LIKE TO ASK IF IT BUGS YOU WHEN MARVEL INTERRUPTS THE CONTINUITY OF SOMETHING LIKE MASTER OF KUNG FU WITH A REPRINT OR A POORLY DONE FILL-IN ISSUE?

Here's a case where Marvel does not deserve the blame. They don't deliberately or maliciously disrupt the continuity with reprints and fill-ins. Indeed, they don't want to resort to reprints. At one time, they didn't even want to use fill-ins, but fill-ins were at least preferable to reprints. (Now it seems fill-ins are used mainly to break in new writers or perhaps to give friends some work.) The blame here rests with the creative people, and their inability to meet deadlines. In the case of MOKF, it has usually been the penciller. With speedy Mike Zeck now on the pencils, I think the problem has been eliminated; for the first time since Paul started the book, it is now actually ahead of schedule.

However, a three-part fill-in is being done by Jim Craig -- simply because Jim likes the book and wanted the opportunity to take all the time he needs to do a good job. And this might be as good a time as any to mention that 80% of the criticism levied against Jim's KUNG FU work should be directed at the inking. I worked from his pencils, remember, I saw his work before it was inked, and it was, by far, the best work he's done to date.

AFTER PAUL LEFT THE BOOK, THERE WAS SOME TALK THAT YOU AND HE WOULD BE GETTING TOGETHER ON SOMETHING ELSE. IS THERE A PROJECT IN THE WORKS? WHAT'S HE DOING RIGHT NOW?

Paul is painting like a fiend, stockpiling a portfolio for his imminent blitzkrieg on the New York paperback publishers. He's doing a sample cover painting for virtually every genre in publishing: Western, science fiction, gothic romance, mystery, girlie-sexy, etc. And he's gonna make it, believe me.

In the meantime, he's done covers for Marvel, illustrations for HUSTLER, and a few things with Don (McGregor).

As far as he and I teaming up again is concerned, I can only say the prospect seems jinxed. Aside from KUNG FU, we've planned to work together on: An ELRIC series, a "spaghetti-western" story for a full-length, full color MARVEL SUPER-SPECIAL project; a "science fiction lady spy" graphic novel for Byron Preiss; a science fiction strip for HEAVY METAL; and a series of full-color cartoons for PLAYBOY and the like. So far, every project is in limbo for one reason or another, but the possibility of finally doing one or more of them yet exists. As far as I'm concerned, and Paul knows it, I'm ready to write a Barbaric-illustrated story any time, anywhere...as long as we are both paid commensurately for our efforts.

I THINK WEREWOLF BY NIGHT COULD HAVE BEEN A LOT BETTER HAD SOMEONE BETTER THAN DON PERLIN BEEN DRAWING IT. DON PERLIN IS INTERESTING SOMETIMES, BECAUSE HE LOOKS KIND OF LIKE JOHNNY CRAIG OR SOME OF THOSE 1950'S ARTISTS, BUT GUYS LIKE MIKE PLOOG AND TOM SUTTON REALLY BROUGHT SO MUCH MORE TO THE BOOK WHEN THEY DID SOME OF THOSE EARLY ISSUES.

Yes, Ploog and Sutton are two of my favorites, and it's a joy for me to work with them. (There is a chance that I'll be doing a special non-Heavy Metal project with Tom Sutton, but it's too early to mention.) And this brings up the key to my personal preference in artists. It is individuality, a distinctive and unique style, that I go for. Corben, Smith, Wrightson, Jaxon, Crumb, Nocbius and a number of others. These guys have their own, very nearly inimitable styles. I've often told guys like Paul Gulacy and Mike Ploog and Tom Sutton that I believe this is definitely the best in the business -- he draws much better than anybody else -- but I'd much rather look at your stuff.

Frank Robbins is a gas. Where else can you find stuff like that? Or Chester Gould? The originals, no matter what kind of technical deficiencies they might display (within reason) are the "best" in my book.

And I think Don Perlin has his own style, too. I happen to like his stuff. Some people don't. Taste, personal opinion -- you can't fight it. But I'll tell you this much: Don Perlin is one of the most conscientious, enthusiastic guys around -- and pure pleasure to work with.

YOU'VE SPOKEN OF SOMETIMES HAVING TO WORK WITH ARTISTS WHO WEREN'T EXACTLY COMPATIBLE WITH YOUR IDEAS OR STYLE OF WRITING. I REALIZE THAT THE ECONOMICS OF COMICS OFTEN GET IN THE WAY OF QUALITY AND CREATIVITY, BUT DO YOU SOMETIMES FEEL LIKE YOU'VE WASTED YOUR TIME WHEN YOU SEE A STORY OF YOURS DRAWN BY AN INEPT ARTIST? I THINK THE WORST FATE OF A COMIC WRITER WOULD BE TO HAVE A STORY DRAWN BY ONE OF WARREN'S FOREIGN ARTISTS.

You're absolutely right. It is patently absurd to take the script for a story whose success depends on the visual interpretation of its verbal subtleties and hand it to an artist who can't read English. I don't care how good the foreign artist is. What you'll get are a lot of pretty pictures cluttered by annoying word balloons containing irrelevant and inapplicable words. You'll get the opposite of synergy -- which, I suppose, is either entropy or a bass or saxophone or incongruity and maybe an amalgam of all four. Any successful collaboration is synergy -- greater than the sum of its individual parts. A basic requirement of synergy is, obviously, compatibility. If you ain't compatable, forget it from the word "go." But compatibility, of course, has absolutely nothing to do with individual worth of quality. Some writers and artists just weren't made to work with each other.

I REALLY LIKED THOSE TWO WEIRDWORLD STORIES YOU AND MIKE PLOOG DID, THE BLACK AND WHITE ONE, AND THE COLOR COMIC. ANY CHANCE THIS COULD BE A REGULAR SERIES?

Ahhh. . . WEIRDWORLD. My new pride and joy. Yes! WEIRDWORLD is now a "regular series."!! The pencils for the first monthly issue -- by Ploog! -- are on my desk at my elbow right now. They're gorgeous, and I'm waiting for a special day, awakening to a special mood, before I sit down to write them.

And even better than that: Mike phoned the other day to tell me he's finished some 20 pages of the MARVEL SUPER SPECIAL full-process color watercolor-painted 63-page-with-comics'-first-three-page-foldout-triple-page-spread magnum-opus WEIRDWORLD EXTRAVAGANZA. It is, I think, far and away the most clever, charming, exciting and ingenious plot I've ever done for comics. Mike says its the best thing he's ever read and he's doing the best work of his entire career on it. Reportedly, Stan Lee took one look at the color xeroxes of the first few pages and stabbed for the phone to praise Mike to the heavens. This is gonna be one hell of a comic book, folks, and I mean it.

ONE OF MY FAVORITE SERIES THAT YOU DID WAS THE FUTURE HISTORY CHRONICLES WITH TOM SUTTON. THE LAST EPISODE HAD THEM FINDING A ZEPPELIN BASE. WHAT HAD YOU PLANNED TO DO AFTER THAT?

And another ahhh. Yes, FUTURE HISTORY CHRONICLES was another one of my favorites and I very much regretted seeing it die -- particularly since I'd already fully written the next plot. The best plot in the series up to that time. Tom Sutton had just finished reading the plot and was going Whee-hah! when the phone rang with the news that PLANET OF THE APES was cancelled. Long faces on Moench and Sutton. Much long distance mutual phone consolation. Talk of doing that plot elsewhere, without the apes. . . And then, procrastination in the face of other deadlines. One must eat, sadly.

As for what I had planned -- indeed, what was contained in that plot -- well, you wouldn't believe it. But maybe someday, somewhere, you'll get to see it.

HOW DID YOU COME UP WITH THE IDEA FOR FUTURE HISTORY CHRONICLES, AND HOW WAS IT DEVELOPED?

Well, we needed a new series for APES and I knew that Tom Sutton would be the artist. So, in an effort to come up with something different from the movies and my own already-existing Jason & Alex strip -- and in an effort to come up with a visual flavor suitable to Tom Sutton's style and inclination -- I came up with FUTURE HISTORY CHRONICLES. And I was right there; Tom loves doing stuff like city-ships, etc. And it's certainly different from the other APES material. The introspective "inparenthesis" captions were a result of an attempt to make the writing, as well as the visuals, different and unique -- experimental, I suppose, though I eased off on them for some unconscious reason.

HOW LONG DID IT TAKE YOU TO WRITE THE FIRST ONE?

Tough question because of so many variables -- I guess a day -- or about eight hours. But it doesn't always work like that; I usually receive about five or six pages at a time. On any given day, I'll write a few pages of this and a few of that. When I do stories full-script (as opposed to the "Marvel method" or plot-first-then pencils-then dialogue & captions-then lettering-then inking) I almost always write the whole story in one sitting -- including, believe it or not, the 55 page KINGDOM OF THE ISLAND OF THE APES. But what a sitting that was! Close to 20 hours, if I remember correctly. As a general rule of thumb, I suppose right now I write an average two pager per hour -- used to be four or five or six an hour. Guess I've slowed down. But most writers say they're lucky to turn out six pages in an entire day. It all boils down to: Each writer finds his own particular speed, and even then, the speed varies depending on mood, weather, headaches, personal problems, happiness, what you ate for lunch, the position of the stars in relation to the moon, or whatever.

WE WERE DISCUSSING THE MARVEL METHOD EARLIER, AND I'D LIKE TO GET BACK TO THAT FOR A MOMENT. IT SEEMS DREADFULLY BACKWARDS TO ME. I'VE NEVER TRIED WORKING THIS WAY, BUT I WOULD HATE HAVING TO ADD BALLOONS AND CAPTIONS TO AN ALREADY PENCILLED STRIP.

I agree with you to a certain extent -- which is why my plots are more detailed than most others in the business. Yet, given my detailed plot and therefore the confidence that I've got my stories under firm control, I do like the so-called "Marvel method." It permits a certain freedom, and it allows you to adjust and compensate. If, in a full script, you describe a certain panel, writing caption and dialogue accordingly, you're stuck with that caption and dialogue -- no matter what the artist draws for that panel. Many a story of mine has made absolutely no sense whatsoever as a result of this -- particularly those stories drawn by the aforementioned artists who are somewhat less than fluent with the English language. If an artist surprises you working from a Marvel-style plot, on the other hand, you will obviously perceive -- before even writing it -- that your planned caption and dialogue ain't gonna make much sense here. You retain the option of being flexible. Often, you're able to "make something out of nothing." And many times, something in the art -- anything from a facial expression to the overall layout of the page -- will inspire you to come up with captions and/or dialogue which is better than what you had planned.

So, with the confidence and thorough conceptual control granted by my detailed plots (which sometimes come close to being a "full script in short story form"), and the flexibility and "grist for collaborative synergy" granted by the "backward" Marvel method, I often feel like I've got the best of both worlds. But every writer is different. Whatever works: Use.

WHAT SOURCES DO YOU DRAW UPON TO WRITE BELIEVABLE DRAMATIC DIALOGUE? SO MANY COMICS HAVE WHAT YOU MIGHT CALL "CLEVER PATTER," WHICH IS MORE OFTEN ANNOYING TO THE READER THAN IT IS CLEVER. DO YOU HAVE A GOOD EAR FOR NATURAL DIALOGUE, OR DO YOU REFER TO FAVORITE BOOKS AND WHATNOT?

First of all, dramatic dialogue and natural dialogue are two very different things. Dramatic dialogue, by its very nature, is contrived -- and contrived is the opposite of natural. A good writer will use both, and know when to opt for which one -- but the real trick is to write both at the same time, to make dramatic dialogue seem like natural dialogue.

The physical-space limitations of a comic book balloon make it nearly impossible to employ natural dialogue which, more often than not, says very little in a great many words. Then again, there are instances where natural dialogue -- a single, "Um," for instance says a great deal in conjunction with voice tone and inflection, facial expression, body moves and posture, et cetera -- all unspoken communication which is very difficult or impossible to convey on the comic book page. Or even on the novel page, for that matter.

A tricky business, this dialogue. But it's not for me to say whether or not I have a good ear for it. I do not refer to favorite books, except in the sense of drawing from the subconscious well where their collective input is stored.

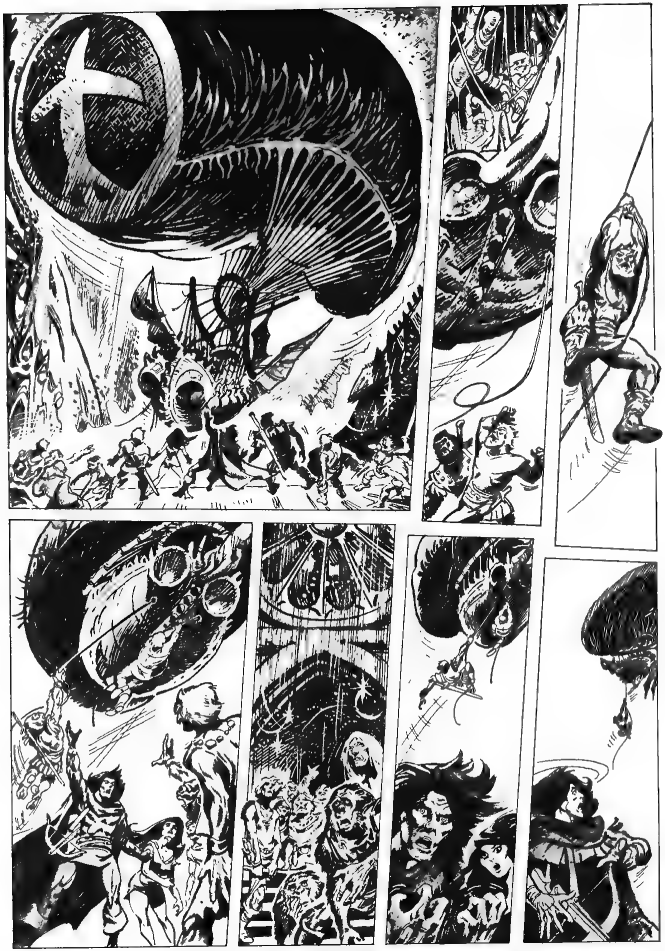
SEEKER 3000 IS ONE OF THE FINER COMICS TO COME OUT IN A LONG TIME. THE MARVEL PREMIERE SERIES IS SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT THAN OTHER MARVEL COMICS, INASMUCH AS IT FEATURES A DIFFERENT CHARACTER BY A DIFFERENT ARTIST AND WRITER EACH ISSUE. HOW DOES A WRITER GET AN IDEA INTO MARVEL PREMIERE? DID YOU APPROACH ARCHIE GOODWIN WITH THE IDEA, SUGGEST THAT TOM SUTTON DRAW IT, AND GO ON FROM THERE?

Thanks for liking SEEKER 3000. Archie Goodwin deserves much credit here; the basic concept and title were his. Sutton was suggested by Arch, as well, and I quickly agreed with the choice.

Each issue of PREMIERE has a different genesis. Sometimes writers bring in their own original concepts (at least, until everyone started grumbling about "not giving anything away to Marvel"), and sometimes the editor will suggest a writer that a character be introduced in a different book -- such as Moon Knight, who made his debut in WEREWOLF BY NIGHT -- is deserving of his own tryout in PREMIERE. In cases of the latter, the writer is seldom wont to decline.

THE STAR WARS COMIC, AFTER TEN ISSUES, FINALLY SEEMS TO BE SHAPING UP, ESPECIALLY WITH CARMINE INFANTINO AND TERRY AUSTIN DRAWING IT. DID YOU EVER HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE ROY THOMAS' PLACE ON THAT BOOK? WOULD YOU HAVE WANTED TO?

Whoa, now! Questions like this are constantly asked and they constantly amaze me. You presume far too much power in my behalf. Decisions about who will write which book are largely governed by office politics and/or presumptions ("No, not him on that book; he can't write superheroes!") which often have little



bearing on logic, justice, or reality. The truth is, I long ago divorced myself from office politics. I can't stand petty gameplaying. Admittedly, this often works to my detriment, but so far the benefits have outweighed the difficulties. Let I've ever wanted to do is mind my own business and write. Give the editors what they want in my work, but keep my personality -- and all my other personal time -- to myself. Needless to say, this does not mean that I refuse to be friends with -- or friendly toward -- anyone in the office. It simply means I will not be remotely involved in squabbles, position jockeying, and order-pecking. Even so, sometimes I'm involved in such things against my will, without my conscious volition -- but the less I have to deal with it, the better. Pursuant to this, I've turned down offers of editorship three times. It's just not where I'm at.

Therefore, in matters of power and prominence and pull, I'm definitely a second-class writer at Marvel. Third-class even. Indeed, I sometimes feel I'm the only one with absolutely no power. Everyone else seems to be a Chief of one degree-rank or another, and I'm the only brave.

Finally: No, I would not have been interested in writing STAR WARS. Heretic that I am, I did not particularly like the movie. Well, let me amend that; I did "like" it, but that's all. It was okay. No big deal. Sloppy direction, lame story, poor acting, merely adequate effects -- yet still enjoyable and just as good as many comic books. But God, it was dumb. Visually dull as hell. The most dreary looking thing this side of Bogdanovich's colorless AT LONG LAST LOVE. Everyone in STAR WARS wears either black, white or grey. The Wookie is brown. There's a spot of blue on the little grey bullet-robot. The only color in the whole damn movie derives from the explosions and the brassy-gold British robot. Why the hell did Lucas bother with color film? The British robot might as well have been silver, eminently suitable to black and white film.

[And to answer the inevitable comparison-question: Yes, I liked CLOSE ENCOUNTERS very much indeed. I was even moved by it. I agree much more with Ray Bradbury's perceptions than with Denny O'Neil's criticisms. And as far as direction goes, Spielberg makes Lucas look like an amateurish piker. Lucas is clubfooted and seems to make the wrong choice nearly every time, whereas Spielberg seems to possess an uncanny knack for choosing the perfect angle -- the perfect shot -- the perfect framing -- every time. Spielberg makes that screen churn, cooking and bubbling with striking images and kinetic energy -- even in the mashed potatoes scene. Indeed, there are at least a dozen images from CLOSE ENCOUNTERS that are indelibly burned into my mind. The only image from STAR WARS is the crippling self-defeating side-shot (slightly from below, yet!) of that swing across a supposedly dizzying chasm. Feh! It looked like they were swinging two or three feet off the ground.]]

YOU'VE SAID IN OTHER INTERVIEWS THAT WORKING FOR DC IS NOT SOMETHING THAT INTERESTS YOU. WHY NOT? TRUE, DC COMICS ARE OFTEN MUCH LIGHTER IN THEIR SUBJECT MATTER AND APPROACH, BUT MARVEL, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAS THE TENDENCY TO GET BORING. I MEAN, HOW MANY TIMES HAVE WE SEEN THOR BANISHED FROM ASGARD, BRUCE BANNER CURED, OR SPIDER-MAN, IRON MAN, AND GOD-KNOWS-WHO-ALL RESIGN FROM SUPER-HERODOM?

This is the only quote from the Steranko interview that I've come close to regretting. I have nothing against National. On the contrary, I wish they'd thrive. I've worked for National and, under certain circumstances, there'd be no reason for me to ignore them as a potential market. At the time of the interview, I was content at Marvel and there was no reason for me to want to work for National. Reasonably speaking, there was nothing at National which was both available and interesting to me personally. Unreasonably speaking, BATMAN has always interested me. And SUPERMAN, done differently, could interest me. Same with any number of their characters. Once upon a time, I was the prime FLASH and GREEN LANTERN drum-thumper. But times changed. They could change again. Furthermore, merely because the then-current National output did not interest me, it does not necessarily follow that their output was bad. After all, I could be wrong. As I said: Taste. Personal opinion. I simply don't go wild over the LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES. There's plenty of stuff published at Marvel that doesn't interest me, either.

Which brings us to your list of "boring" Marvel stuff. With the exception of Bruce Banner, you'll notice that I have nothing to do with any of the characters on your list. And in my limited handling of Banner, you'll also notice that I have not yet succumed to the good old "Banner gets cured" plot. So the question doesn't really concern me as a writer.

I OFTEN WONDER ABOUT EDITORS, ABOUT WHAT IT IS THEY DO. BY DEFINITION, ONE WOULD ASSUME THAT THEY "EDIT" AWKWARD OR BAD PARTS OF DIALOGUE OR ACTION FROM A STORY, OR SUGGEST BETTER CONTINUITY IN SPOTS, ETC. BUT FROM READING COMICS, FANS MUST WONDER IF EDITORS EVEN EXIST! FROM YOUR EXPERIENCES IN COMICS, WHAT DOES AN EDITOR'S JOB CONSIST OF? ALSO, WHY DID YOU TURN DOWN SUCH A POSITION WHEN IT WAS OFFERED TO YOU?

Comic editors are a breed unto themselves, bearing almost no resemblance to editors in any other phase of publishing with which I'm familiar -- from big-city newspapers to book publishers to mid-level magazines all the way to the Hefner honchos. Whatever else non-comics editors are -- hardnosed, demanding, irascible -- at least they always, always, know enough to treat their writers with a basic modicum of respect.

I sometimes think comics are too incestuous. Almost without exception, every editor in comics is or has been also a writer himself. This opens the floodgate for competitiveness, rivalry, often even jealousy. The team-link is instantly lost and very often the relationship devolves into one of opposition. If an editor is constantly operating with the subconscious conviction that "I can write better than this," there's little hope for respect on either side. Furthermore, many comics editors -- and writers -- are just plain incompetent. Their applications would be laughed at anywhere else.

I understand that Julius Schwartz, who is not really a writer himself, seems to have certain qualities in common with the late SF editor John Campbell. I also detect a great deal of respect for Schwartz from those who have worked for him. These two facts may not be coincidence.

Now, just what does a comics editor do? Well, at Marvel, he kind of edits the whole line -- whatever that may mean, and I confess I don't really know -- rather than editing each specific title. I know that Roy Thomas had more than enough on his hands just dealing with the businessmen upstairs. God knows how he managed to come up with so many concepts for new books, let alone keep tabs on what was happening in the established books. Since Roy's term I haven't worked in the office and consequently I've completely lost track of whatever it is the ensuing editors have done or are currently doing. Making Big Decisions, I guess.

One last insight: For some unfathomable reason, comics editors seem to wallow in seas of negativity. Not once has a comics editor ever phoned me for the sole and specific reason of thanking or congratulating me for doing a good job, etc...or turning in a good story, or getting my work in on time or ahead of schedule. But they sure are damn quick to grab that phone and complain.

Why did I turn down the position of editor? Incidentally, these were offers to edit the black and

white line, not the whole schmear.) Well, I touched on some of it earlier. I can only add that my six months tenure -- the shortest on Harvet record -- was far more than enough. I don't like hassles; I can't tell someone his stuff stinks; I dislike having my writing time occupied by anything else; the money was poor; and I like to sleep late.

THE ONLY INTERESTING OUTLET THAT I SEE FOR ARTISTS AND WRITERS WHO REALLY CARE ENOUGH TO ADVANCE THE MEDIUM ARE BOOKS LIKE BLOODSTAR AND SOME THAT BYRON PREISS IS DOING. WHAT ARE YOUR OPINIONS ON THIS?

Yes, I've always been interested in new formats. I've got a Byron Preiss/HEAVY METAL book coming out soon myself. My complaint right now is that most of these "high-quality" comics seem to have great art and either lousy writing or mere adaptations of non-comics stories -- often stories which are poorly adapted and/or not suitable for comics. And then there are the phoney-comics high-quality comics. CHANDLER may be great in its own right, but it sure ain't comics. I'd like to see a real-comics high-quality comic (or graphic novel or whatever you want to call it) with great art and a great original story -- a story tailor-made to fully exploit the potential of the comics medium, as well as a story with a good solid plotline and sophisticated writing.

Hell, I've wanted to tackle the above project a half-dozen times myself. Maybe someday I'll pull it off.

I'M CURIOUS AS TO WHAT SOME OF YOUR PERSONAL BELIEFS ARE. WHAT I MEAN IS, DO YOU BELIEVE IN REINCARNATION, OR ARE YOU AGNOSTIC OR AN ATHEIST OR A STAUNCH BELIEVER, OR ARE YOU INTO "FRINGE" BELIEFS LIKE PYRAMID POWER, MEDITATION, ETC? DO YOU RELY MORE ON YOUR OWN INDIVIDUAL CONVICTIONS DEALING MORE WITH DECENCY AND MORALITY THAN WITH GOD OR RELIGION?

I believe in very little other than what is obvious and the fact that many truths are not obvious.

As for as organized religions go, I'm definitely agnostic, atheistic, and just plain opposed. I think I've mentioned that I'm not a joiner. I'm a staunch loner and the best credo for loners is also the simplest: The Golden Rule. Otherwise known as: Mind you own business unless you're friendly. Organized religions have rarely minded their own business; indeed, they've been known to kill those recalcitrant souls who have refused to become converts. A lotta damn gall, I say. Worship or die -- or, at best, burn forever in hell. No, organized religions are responsible for too many proven deaths and no proven salvations for my tithe-money. Besides, I don't like the God they preach. And God -- if God exists on their terms -- didn't create Roman Catholicism or Protestantism or Buddhism or any of the others. Men did -- men no better than me.

Then again, I have come very close to despair. I see too much evil. Too much corruption. Most of all, I see it in myself. Greed, vanity, selfishness, and all the rest. I've very nearly become a misanthrope, but thankfully not quite. I still believe in myself, and even in the basic worth of humanity, though this last often seems pathetically foolish. But most of all, I believe in a few select others -- both those I know intimately and those I only know from afar -- the ones who help me get by. I hope I sometimes help them get by.

As for all the "fringe" stuff, well, I don't really believe in it but I sure find it fascinating. The more bizarre, the better. I love mystical and unexplained mysteries, phenomena, and whatnot. Being Scottish and a lifelong lover of dinosaurs, I exult in the latest Loch Ness Monster news. Also enjoy flying saucer stuff and -- for some real mondo bizarro -- Fortean phenomena. I read COSMIC TRIGGER not long ago, a book which deals in large part with coincidences and, finding an uncanny plethora of coincidences with my own life in the book, I began exchanging letters with Robert Anton Wilson. Great fun.

FINALLY, HOW DO YOU SPEND YOUR TIME WHEN YOU'RE NOT WRITING?

Mostly reading. I read like a sonofabitch, a book a day if I let myself go. And there's nothing I like better than letting myself go. Deb and I both like movies and if it weren't for the cardboard-crap theatres out here in the boondocks, we'd go a lot more often. When living in cities, I've been known to hit three or four films a week.

I also like to putter around the grounds here, snoop in Deb's huge vegetable garden, take little strolls and check out the new trees springing up, watch the praying mantises which are in tremendous abundance around here. For longer walks, I'll take the dog down for a swim in the creek a mile or two away from the house. Then there's the grass to cut -- I'm keeping less than a third of the five acres cut, letting the rest go to woods, and it still takes six hours on a 10 hp tractor lawnmower. Soon I'll have to stain all thirty or forty windows on the house and garage; the putty is starting to go -- house is now three years old and I've yet to re-stain anything.

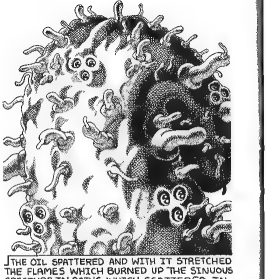
I've gotten back to watching sports on the tube, and talk shows, but nothing else -- unless it's a good old movie. (Can't watch recent movies on TV; too much of the sides are chopped off.) And I love taking long solitary drives through the country, tape-player blasting at decibels only my ears can withstand, on the way to my favorite local bookstores.

Oh, there's plenty to do. If only they'd leave you alone, eh?

THE NEW COMPANION MAGAZINE TO THE "RBCC"

FANTASTIC EXPLOITS

Volume Two, Number One


THE OIL SPATTERED AND WITH IT STRETCHED THE FLAMES WHICH BURNED UP THE SINUOUS CREATURE IN PATHS WHICH SCATTERED IN HALF A DOZEN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS.

Comics fandom is producing more talented artists today than ever before in its history! I know, because I've been involved with the RBCC since 1970, first as assistant editor and then as editor and publisher since August, 1974. Never before have I seen as many truly talented artists in fandom as there are now. The art staff of the RBCC is now double what it ever was before at any time! Due to this increased amount of talent available to me, I'm launching a second magazine with an RBCC type of format. The title is FANTASTIC EXPLOITS. This title was previously published by the former editor of the RBCC, G.B. Love. With his permission, I am reviving this title but starting the numbering over again with Volume Two, #1 because it will be quite different from the previous run of FANTASTIC EXPLOITS. FE will be printed on the exact same paper the RBCC is but will run a total of 68 pages, with only, perhaps, two pages of ads at the most. Thus it will have more pages of features than an issue of the RBCC does. Also unlike the RBCC, each issue will have *FULL COLOR* front and back covers. KERRY GAMMILL is working up a *FULL COLOR WRAPAROUND COVER* painting for the first issue based on the story "Something Lost, Something Never Found" which appears in RBCC #147. RON WILBER was quite taken with this sword and sorcery tale and in keeping with his desire to move into more serious comic art (as opposed to satirical comic art), Ron is doing a complete comic strip adaptation of this story whose text version was in RBCC. Ron has been given carte blanche to make his adaptation as long as he wants to make it. Ron's enthusiasm for this story is evident in the two sample panels from his adaptation above and at the right. Ron wanted to adapt it. I didn't ask him to do it, he asked me! Although FE will generally not feature reprints, in issue #1 I plan to reprint Kerry Gammill's 16 page adaptation of Norman Spinrad's "Subjectivity" from RBCC #'s 124-127. FE will be even more heavily art oriented than the RBCC and will include a John Carter of Mars portfolio by BRET BLEVINS, JIM HOIEE and others. There will also be an article on DEADMAN (with art by FRED HEMBECK and STEVE BISSETTE) as well as one comparing the two films with the novel version of INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS (art by MARC HEMPEL). Other features are in the works. FE will not have regular columns at first but may develop some later. We plan to start off by publishing 3 times a year, working up to 4.

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(Note: These are special introductory rates only. Sub rates will increase to the normal level upon publication of FANTASTIC EXPLOITS #1 in late April:

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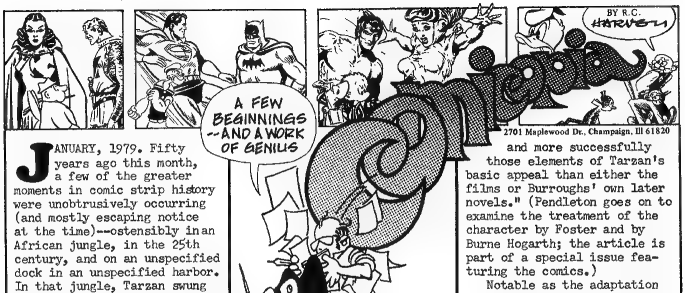


2701 Maplewood Dr., Champaign, Ill 61820

JANUARY, 1979. Fifty years ago this month, a few of the greater moments in comic strip history were unobtrusively occurring (and mostly escaping notice at the time)--ostensibly in an African jungle, in the 25th century, and on an unspecified dock in an unspecified harbor. In that jungle, Tarzan swung into comic strips at the end of Harold Foster's pen; in the 25th century, Buck Rogers began defying gravity and predicting the future; and on that dock, Castor Oyl met Popeye.

Remarkably, two of the comics' most famous characters debuted on the same day: January 7, 1929--both Buck and Tarzan. Even more remarkable is the less often remarked fact that Popeye first appeared a scant 10 days later.

This convenient cluster of historical debuts makes this month a more than ordinary month for commemorative celebrations. But before you scamper to the closet for 50-year-old astrology charts to find out what conjunction of stars made this all possible, let me hasten to say that I am going to make nothing of this coincidental blush of cartoon creativity. That it all happened just fifty years ago this month within the narrow compass of a fortnight is notable in itself, requiring no further speculative embroidery.

(And lest you think, in view of my notice of Mickey Mouse's fiftieth last issue, that this corner is now become the place where only birthday parties are going to be held henceforth, let me admit to having toyed with the idea. The temptation is great to use anniversary dates as excuses to examine some great strips.

The decade into which we are now entering will see the 50th anniversary of many of the great strips in comics history. Why, in three months, we could celebrate the 50th anniversary of Percy Crosby's SKIPPY; in May, Captain Easy's debut. And next year marks the 50th year since the coming of Scorchy Smith, Joe Palooka, and Blondie. And the next year... Well, I'll try to resist the temptation.)

What makes these three 1929 strips so important in the history of the comics? In less informed times, TARZAN and BUCK ROGERS were nominally the first adventure strips. But recent scholarship has nudged them out of that niche, leaving us to wonder about what makes them so special.

TARZAN's claim to fame is scarcely originality: the strip was an adaptation of Burroughs' successful novel. But while not an original creation for the comics, the TARZAN strip became probably the best of the adaptations of the Ape-man. In an article to appear this spring in THE JOURNAL OF POPULAR CULTURE, Thomas Pendleton maintains convincingly that "the strip preserved in greater part and more successfully those elements of Tarzan's basic appeal than either the films or Burroughs' own later novels." (Pendleton goes on to examine the treatment of the character by Foster and by Burne Hogarth; the article is part of a special issue featuring the comics.)

Notable as the adaptation of Tarzan to the comic strip is, the strip enjoys a place in the history of the comics because it marks the advent of serious, realistic illustration in the medium. Other early adventure strips gestured in the direction of realistic illustration, but Foster made the first full-scale assault and thereby went a long way towards establishing the illustrative manner as the most appropriate for rendering adventure strips.

BUCK ROGERS was also drawn realistically. But while Foster's artwork in TARZAN was confident, masterful--the perspective and proportions cleanly and clearly rendered, the staging cinematic with close-ups, long-shots, changing camera angles--Dick Calkins' line in BR was sketchy and tentative, his figures seemed sometimes caught in awkward poses, and his camera rarely changed its focus or its angle. As Ray Bradbury observes in his introduction to the Chelsea House collection of BR strips, it wasn't the artwork that assured success for the strip: it was the action, the story--the futuristic science, the gimmicks and glimpses of the 25th century.

The strip defied gravity. Its characters soared wingless on jet-propelled rocket-belts and hovercraft. They fought

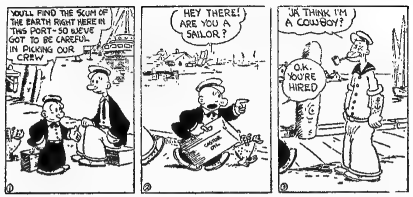
with disintegrators and exploding bullets, battling radar equipped robot armies, television controlled rocket bombs, and invasions from Mars.

Like TARZAN, BUCK ROGERS was adapted to comic strip form from fiction--in this case, retaining as writer the author of "Armageddon, 2419 A.D.," Philip Nowlan. Although not an original creation for comic strips, BR occupies its niche in the history of the medium because it was the first strip to exploit fully and seriously the implications of the dawning scientific age. As such, BR captured the imagination of its readers. But it contributed nothing in itself new to the way the art of the comic strip was practiced.

IN POPEYE, we have something of a different order altogether from his two January predecessors. With the coming of Popeye, we see the flowering of a truly remarkable genius for comedy. Both TARZAN and BR were important in comic strip history, but both were derivative characters, adapted from other creations. Popeye was unique. And as a work of a single creative genius, THIMBLE THEATRE stands head and shoulders above both the other strips. Therefore, let us on this 50th anniversary of the sailor-man's appearance pause at the threshhold of Thimble Theatre to recognize the signal accomplishments of that strip's creator, Elzie Crisler Segar.

Segar did not shape the medium like Foster did. But Segar exploited the possibilities of the art form, using to the fullest its unique capabilities. And in the process, he created one of the most memorable characters in 20th century fiction, and he constructed a morality play of profound and lasting impact.

Popeye is considered by some to be the original superhero in comic strips. I suspect that those who so dub Segar's one-eyed sailor think to give his creator status. But they don't. To begin with, they're wrong. As Bill Blackbeard points out in his introduction to the Nostalgia Press POPEYE, Popeye was not the first on the comic pages to possess superhuman strength and durability. Fontaine Fox had Powerful Katrinka in TOONERVILLE FOLKS and Cliff Sterrett had a powerful black strongman in POLLY AND HER PALS--both before Popeye took any bows in Thimble Theatre.


YOU'LL FIND THE SCUM OF THE EARTH RIGHT HERE IN THIS PORT--SO WE'VE GOT TO BE CAREFUL IN PICKING OUR CREW
HEY THERE! ARE YOU A SAILOR?
NO
UH, THINK I'M A COWBOY?
OK-- YOU'RE HIRED

JANUARY 17, 1929

Moreover, to distinguish Segar's accomplishments solely by crediting him with the comics' first superhero is to sell his comic genius short. His strip was much more than a superhero strip.

It all began in 1919--as THIMBLE THEATRE and without Popeye. Its original cast included Willy Wormwood, a villain akin to Desperate Desmond, whose lot in life was to pester his two co-performers, Olive Oyl and her boyfriend, Ham Gravy. With the introduction shortly thereafter of Olive's brother, Castor Oyl, "the vital door into the real Thimble Theatre was opened," as Blackbeard says. Olive's "kooky, maniacally ambitious, pint-sized brother...was an elemental force, a single-minded seeker after wealth, women, and power with almost no abilities, or luck, to accomplish his ends."

Castor was, in Segar's words, "Olive's foolish brother, not exactly half-witted but exceedingly dumb. Just this dumb: when Olive's pet duck fell into a deep hole and no one could extricate it, Castor came by with a water hose and floated the duck to the top. He was clever in his own inimitable way. He even invented coal that would last forever and he fireproofed safety dynamite so it couldn't explode."

Castor's greedy ambitions motivated the strip for some years. One get-rich scheme followed another, and the strip developed continuity. The stories began to ramble on for months, but such was Segar's comic inventiveness that people enjoyed the ramble.

One of Segar's devices for creating suspense and maintaining interestingly comic continuity was to introduce wildly eccentric characters into his story. The strip would focus for days--even months--on the Dickensian peculiarities and foibles of some minor character. As this character kept us entertained, Segar could, at the same time, inch his story along, day by day. Popeye was one of these characters.

IN ONE OF HIS get-rich-quick schemes, Castor turns gambler. But not before he has a sure-fire system: his uncle has given him a Whiffle Hen, a good luck bird that guarantees winning at games of chance for anyone who rubs the three hairs on the bird's head. Castor decides to take the Whiffle Hen to an offshore gambling hell called Dice Island and use the bird to fleece the gamblers.

Castor buys a boat, but the boat has no crew, so Castor goes in search of one. And that's what he hires: one--namely, Popeye. On January 17,

1929, Castor approaches a one-eyed sailor with a corn-cob pipe standing on the dock and hires him.

The upshot of the adventure is that, with the help of Popeye, Castor and company clean up the gambling hell--and Popeye moves onto center stage in Thimble Theatre.

Popeye was ready with his fists from almost the moment of his introduction. Rather than redress injustice with words and sweet reasonableness, Popeye simply bopped it in the nose. As Coulton Waugh observes, "The readers liked this. Here was someone who did what, ideally, they would have done. Letters began to pour in to Segar, praising the new character. Segar took the hint. If they wanted a fight, they'd get it."

BEFORE THE FIGHTING got too fierce, though, Segar made his fighter a gladiator who could last through any series of battles. Since he reacted with his fists instead of his feet or his mouth (as did the other less violence-prone characters in the strip), Popeye seemed, in comparison, more than ordinarily strong. What began as a simple comic comparison between a roughneck sailor and a pint-sized schemer became, as Segar fine tuned the focus of his comedy, an exaggerated comic contrast. Popeye's ordinary (probably) prowess at water-front tavern brawling were elevated over the years to superhuman strength as he proved himself again and again superior to a series of successively more intimidating foes. Before too long, his reputation as a superman was well established.

The process began almost immediately when Segar enabled Popeye to survive otherwise mortal gunshot wounds. Shot sixteen times during the escape from Dice Island, Popeye recuperates in the ship's hold--cradeling the Whiffle Hen, rubbing the hairs on its head, and hoping he'd have the "luck" to survive. He does, of course--and thereby establishes himself as indestructable. A brawler of superhuman strength who is also indestructable, Popeye is a formidable fighter indeed.

Segar's finishing touch was a stroke of graphic comic genius. Popeye's bulging forearms, those watermelons attached to his body with pipe cleaners, gave "ham-fisted" a visual metaphor. Although the graphic device defies anatomy and affronts common sense, it succeeds remarkably in suggesting pugilistic power. Popeye's arms suggest the velocity of his swing: it's as if the centrifugal force of repeated round-house punches have shoved all the sailor's muscles to his extremities. His arms suggest the enormous impact of his blows: ballooning around his fists, his arms convert his fists to sledge-hammers that gain more striking force by being at the ends of long handles.

In comparison, the bulging bicepts of conventionally constructed superheroes seem scarcely sufficient to their tasks--as if too far removed from the point of impact, the striking fist. All Popeye's muscles--and most of his weight--are bunched where they'll be felt the most: right behind his knuckles. Conceptually and visually, Popeye is the comic epitome of the perfect fighter.

Segar made canny use of his hero's abilities. In the first place, Segar was inventive enough that he didn't need to rely on Popeye's amazing capabilities for his stories. The

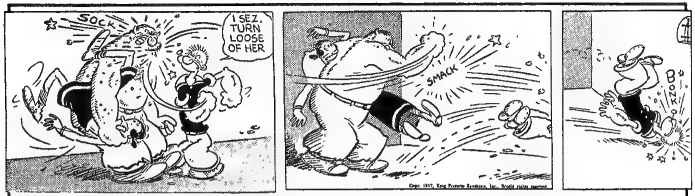
Thimble Theatre stories continued to roll on, introducing more minor characters with comic eccentricities and involving them in fantastic plots--ignoring for months on end the spectacular abilities of the strip's star performer. Only when backed into a corner by developments beyond all other control does Popeye unleash his formidable prowess.

As Blackbeard puts it: "A little bit of such ability, Segar was tasteful enough to perceive, went a long way. It fell to the lot of men of much less talent and imagination (two of them as a team, in fact) to make such super-powers in a lead character the whole point and purpose of a strip...thereby /launching/ a new strip genre of superheroics /that/ made millions (for their publishers)."

SEGAR'S RESTRAINT in putting Popeye to work fighting was one of the fundamental mechanisms of suspense in the continuity. We wait (often impatiently) for things to get so bad--for indignity after indignity to be heaped upon insult after insult-- that, at last, Popeye uncorks a whallop that settles the hash of the bad guys for once and all.

Our immense satisfaction at these turns of events derives from two aspects of the strip: (1) the nature of the bad guys and (2) the nature of the avenging hero. Elementary: the bad buys deserve what they get. They are invariably self-seeking and heartless: brutal and inhuman, their very excesses are exaggerated to the point of comic caricature (hence, our enjoyment of the strip even while we wait for Popeye to set things right).

In contrast to this exaggerated (and therefore comic) villainy stands the strip's hero. Popeye burns with moral fervor. There are few "grays" for Popeye: he knows what's good and what's evil, and he has no doubts about which he should choose. He is nonetheless kindly and charitable,



A TYPICAL POPEYE FIGHT SCENE exploits the visual character of the medium. The brutish villain's hulking size contrasts ridiculously with the sailor's puny build, making Popeye's eventual triumph comic because it is so unlikely. Segar lends credence to the improbable, however: with exaggerative comic logic, he concentrates all of Popeye's muscle and fighting weight in his bulging forearms and fists --right there, at the end of a swinging arm in the very instant of contact.

willing to forgive most human foibles.

But once those erstwhile foibles in the strip's villains emerge as full-fledged evils, Popeye moves inexorably to redress them. In this, as Waugh observes, Segar captured an essential aspect of the American character--the impulse to act with pragmatic decisiveness.

"Popeye," says Waugh, "is action incarnate. He wastes energy; his temperament is ardent; even his good deeds are done with intensity, with fierce face and furious tempo .... He proceeds always under full steam, with fluttering flags and bands playing. God bless him, he is America."

There's more to America--and to morality--than this. And Popeye is more than this, too. As he himself puts it:

"No matter what you says I yam-- I yam what I yam an' tha's all I yam!"

With these words, Popeye completes his own portrait. As Waugh says, "Here he emerges in full splendor. One 'I yam' and he would have been esoteric; two 'I yams' would have made him a fascist, caring nothing for other men's fate; three 'I yams' define him as a democrat, and an inheritor of common weaknesses, whose fruition must be found in union and understanding with others."

"...tha's all I yam," Popeye's last words, mark him as conscious of his own failings and that awareness makes him one of us. He recognizes his mistakes and is as fiercely humble about them as he is fiercely indignant about evil-doers.

ALTHOUGH there are few moral "grays" for Popeye, Segar realized that the world is not easily divided into the clear-cut moral "blacks" and "whites" that animate his hero. Most of us see mostly shades of gray. Popeye, while not morally myopic in this way, has traits that are equally inhibiting--traits that make him in moral matters somewhat like most of us: indecisive.

One I've mentioned: he is charitable and bends over backwards to excuse the villainies he encounters as being foibles not felonies. But he is also sometimes incapacitated by plain ignorance.

Not that Popeye is stupid. Ignorance is not stupidity. Ignorance is the absence of knowledge, and in Popeye's case, it stems from his simple-mindedness, his black-and-white vision of the world, and from his impulse to be kind. Often Popeye simply can't believe (or refuses to) the evils that surround him. He chooses to believe that everyone is motivated instead by impulses similar to his own.

"When people think that a kind-hearted person is crazy," he says, "it ain't sayin' much for a world which is supposed to be civilized."

Popeye chooses to believe that everyone is as civilized as he. And that is the chief manifestation of his ignorance.

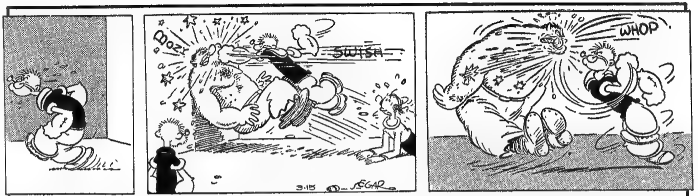
All of this works to build suspense. We know Popeye is indestructable and that his superhuman strength makes him well-nigh invincible. What we don't know is when he'll discover that a particular set of baddies is not civilized. How much will he put up with in the name of human forgiveness?

Segar pushes his stories as far as he can before he reaches the answer. And with each little push, the villainies become more exaggerated, more ridiculous--more the stuff of comedy and less the stuff of tragedy.

We know Popeye can't be destroyed. He'll cough up a clip of bullets, ignoring the holes in his hide, and go about his business. For most of his career, the reason for his indestructability (the magical endowment of the Whiffle Hen) is forgotten, and we are kept in suspense not by doubt about his survival but by the question of why he survives.

The answer is the strip's ultimate joke--and its moral.

He survives because he doesn't know any better: he seems completely ignorant of any understanding of the human body that would link bullet holes to mortality. Once, complaining that a bullet embedded next to his heart was "tickling" him, Pop-



trument of pugalism, at the point of impact with the villain's jaw. When Popeye throws everything he's got (as in the fifth panel above), the weight and centrifugal force of his punch bring the rest of his body along with it, adding to the impact of his blow. With comic visual exaggeration, Segar mocks the fine art of fisticuffs--but he also evens the odds for his hero, heightening suspense and making the impossible victory credible.

eye simply shrugged it off, saying, "Aw, what th' heck! Sittin' here beefin' ain't helpin' none--if me ticker's busted I'll have it took out like a tonsil!"

The "joke" in this circumstance (which runs like a refrain through the strip) arises from Segar's unique exploitation of the visual and verbal nature of the medium. Although the words present us with "facts" that are patently impossible, the pictures persuade us to suspend disbelief. Segar's cartoony style divorces his story visually from reality as we know it, and once we have accepted the cartoony conventions of his style of drawing as a way of representing seeming people in seeming predicaments, we have left the door open for fantasy to creep in. And we therefore accept the impossible "realities" with which Segar's words confront us because they seem of-a-piece with the pictures. And with the stage thus set, Segar can bring up the curtain on his morality play.

IN THIS REGARD, Segar's signal accomplishment was to give to his sailor the mysterious power of an elemental force. Popeye is a force for good that cannot be defeated. Segar's own faith becomes ours. We do not doubt that good exists. We ask about such elemental forces not whether they can survive but when will they come into play. That this plaintive question echoes across human history is, itself, testimony to the inherent goodness of man that validates Segar's faith.

To this vision of the world, Segar added a lyric quality both comic and profound. We laugh at Popeye's mutilation of the language, at his hilarious mispronunciation of words. But in his unending struggle with this uniquely human attribute, language, we can see more than comedy. It is as if that elemental moral force were trying to come into being, to become articulate, to become human--to become, at last, effective.

But Segar not only embodied in his sailor a fundamental truth about man's moral striving. He also made us laugh--at Popeye and at ourselves--as we kept the faith. Indeed, laughter may be the best antidote against losing that faith.

Segar's comic genius resided in his ability to caricature the human condition without destroying our moral faith. Perhaps he could do that because, as Martin Sheridan observed, "he took his star seriously. That is, he came to believe in Popeye as a real person--absurd, preposterous and rather owlish with his one eye, but always fired with the authentic spark of life."

Segar implied his agreement. "Popeye is much more than a goofy comic character to me," Sheridan quotes him as saying. "He represents all of my emotions, and he is an outlet for them.... Popeye's past life has been a sad one, and I claim that pathos is the best background for humor. Tragedy and comedy are so closely related that it is only a step from one to the other. The deeper the plot, the more chance there is for humor. To me, Popeye is really a serious person, and when a serious person does something funny--it's really funny. If you give the readers the impression that you are trying to make them laugh, you're lost."

And as Sheridan said (and Segar proved) that philosophy is "pretty near to the touchstone of comic strip success."

HARV

SEGAR'S IS A TOUGH ACT to follow, and the work of the current POPEYE cartoonist, Bud Sagendorf (like the work of George Wunder or Caniff's TERRY), suffers perhaps unjustly by comparison. In his humor fanzine, RUBBER CITY BLUES #5, Steven Alan Bennett tries to redress the injustice with a special anniversary Popeye issue, featuring Sagendorf and the comic book and film Popeyes; 40 pages, $2--8h2 Hunt St., Akron, OH 44306.

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witzend

an ADULT fantasy magazine

Wallace Wood
Mike Zeck
Ruben Yandoc
Bill Pearson
Nick Cuti
Dan Adkins

Wallace Wood's private portfolio of erotic sketches from "THE WORLD OF THE WIZARD KING" are only a part of the inexplicable contents of this space warped issue. Fiendish Nick Cuti wrote "THE GEKS" especially for Mike Zeck because he knew Mike was a sadistic killer, as is evident in the finished art. Bill Pearson's nudes are anatomically stippled with obvious lust, and Ruben Yandoc's chapter in the saga of the mute girl named "KYM" is even more cryptic than Heavy Metal would try to get away with. Fact is, we always *did* think outer space was in.

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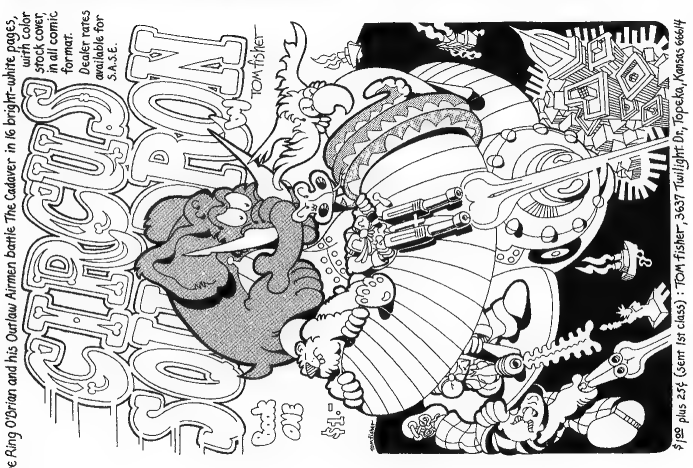

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FRANK THORNE, Artist "If BOB (JOHN BUSCEMA and BARRY SMITH ain't seen these it will be a high crime. I don't know which I like better. Sentimentally the SONJA bits have. You drew her cute well. Very well in fact. The shoulder pieces are correct which pleases me. Most mess up the epaulets. BUT...the others PUNG TRACKS? I thought I'd bust. Perhaps the ALTER OF WOODPILE! No the FALSE Giants Daughter...DAMN. I can't make up my mind. Thanks for the great portfolio. It's made my Christmas already. It's a wonderful collection. Gotta be honest THE SONG OF RED SHEIK is my favorite."

KERRY GAMMILL, Artist/Marvel Comics: "I think Conan is great! A warped blend of Robert E. Howard and Fred Flintstone, mixing the savage with the rickshaw. Eddie Eddings is one of the most skilled cartoonists to ever come out of fandom.

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(Chesterfield)
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#91R - BIG BAND BROADCASTS
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"GUN ISLAND" 10/23/38
(Blue Coal"

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"Phony Screen Test"
EDDIE CANTOR SHOW guest Esther Williams 10/18/44
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"The Thing in the Tunnel"
LIGHTS OUT
"Sub Basement" 8/24/43

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"Guest Of Death"
(Blue Coal"

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8/2/47
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(Ipana)
BURNS AND ALLEN 9/30/48
(Maxwell House)

105R - FIBBER McGEE & MOLLY
"Escaped Convicts" 5/30/39
(Johnsons Wax)
EDDIE CANTOR SHOW
"Christmas Show" 12/20/44

106R - THE MILTON BERLE SHOW
3/2/48
(Philip Morris)
THE LIFE OF RILEY
"Riley's sister wants to
marry a bookie"

107R -

107R - JACK BENNY SHOW
guest Ingrid Bergman
(Lucky Strike)
MYSTERIOUS TRAVELER
"Last Survivor"

108R - COMMAND PERFORMAN
"Parody of Dick Tracy"
with Bob Hope, Jerry Colona,
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etc.

109R - THE SHADOW (2 shows)
"Valley Of Living Terror"
(Carey Salt)
"The Ruby Of Cava1"

110R - EDGAR BERGEN & CHARLIE McCARTHY
guest Kennan. 9/9/45
SONGS BY MORTON DOWNEY
12/14/48
(Coca-Cola)

111R - GUNSMOKE
"Ramirez Daughter"
HARRY LIME, THE THIRD MAN
starring Orson Wells
"Murder On The Riviera"

112R - ESCAPE
"North of Polaris"
THE SHADOW
"Traffic in Death"

113R - EDGAR BERGEN & CHARLIE McCARTHY
guest Margaret O'Brien 11/18/45
THE RALEIGH SHOW
with Tommy Dorsey. Guests Jack
Benny and Bing Crosby.
(Raleigh & Kool)

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(Rexall)
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"Kathy Lee"

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IT PAYS TO BE IGNORANT
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the VIII"

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guests Abbott & Costello, and
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(Chase & Sanborn and Royal)

120R - PHIL HARRIS - ALICE FAYE SHOW
10/24/48
(Rexall)
AMOS & ANDY 10,000th SHOW
(Rexall)

121R - THE ALDRICH FAMILY
"The Babysitters" 5/11/44
HARRY LIME, THE THIRD MAN
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"The Painted Smile"

122R - SAM SPADE
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Andrew Sisters.
THE JACK SMITH SHOW
6.29/51
(Tide)

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"The Halloween Party"
(Swift)
SAM SPADE
"The Stopped Watch Caper"
(Wildroot Cream Oil)

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"The Wilson Bros."
MARK TRAIL
"Tracks of Death"
(Kellogg's Corn Flakes)

125R - PHIL HARRIS - ALICE FAYE SHOW
10/31/48
(Rexall)
BERGEN & CHARLIE McCARTHY
guest Don Ameche
(Chase & Sanborn and Royal)

126R - NATIONAL BARNDANCE
10/2/43
(Alka-Seltzer)
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"Lum fakes a nervous breadown"
SUPERMAN 1/31/45
(Kellogg's Pep)

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"The Perfect Maid Murder Case"
(Bayer Aspirin)
HARRY LIME, THE THIRD MAN
starring Orson Wells
"Man Of Mystery"

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11/28/48
(Ford)
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"The Suggestion Box"

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For exs,ple: FAD 2 features:

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- Columns like a media review by MONSTER TIMES and SICK writer Don Plotz, comix by THE COMIC JOURNAL's Bruce Sweeney, APTA's Steve Souza discusses past science fiction books,there's also a review of the remake of INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS. There are also reviews of comics, fanzines, and television. This issue also kicks off our first fan forum, "BATTLESTAR GALACTIA vs. STAR WARS". Reader participation here is more than welcome.
- The are in FAD 2 includes a SF Portfolio by Earl Geier, Jerry Collins, David Heath Jr., William Neville and others. The Wrightsen interview is beautifully illustrated by Mitchell O'Cornell. Other contributers include Doug Herring, Sam de la Rosa, and Neil Riehle.

Now for the good part. FAD is published 8 times a year. An 8 issue subscription is a low $3.00. That's only about 35¢ an issue. Every issue is mailed flat in its own envelope. Single copy price is 75¢ + 25¢ P.&H. So subscribe now and save big! Ad rates are $6.00 for a full page, $4.00 for a half page and $2.00 for a ¼ page. Classified ads are free! FAD now reaches some 1,000 happy fans. Why don't you join them. You won't be dissapointed. Because if you are...I'll refund your money!

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*THE CITY ON THE EDGE OF WHATEVER Coloring Book -- Gordon Carleton's well-known slide show parody of the episode and of Harlan Ellison, reproduced in coloring book form. Photo-offset, saddle-stapled.

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*DARK INTERLUDE, by Sharon Emily, illustrated by Joni Wagner, will be a T'Kuhtian Press Special Publication, due out in Fall '78. A novella describing what happened to Lord Darth Vader after the end of STAR WARS. Limited Edition -- only as many copies as are ordered will be printed. Estimated length of 'zine: 75 pp.

*SNOW ON THE MOON, written by and illustrated by Anji Valenza, will be a T'Kuhtian Press Special Publication, due out in Fall '78/Winter '79. An anthology of the Klysadel Universe, including seven never-before-published stories! Includes a 11" x 17" fold-out poster. Be the first one on your block to read all the naughty stories that people only used to whisper about Thobo Telecom, android extraordinaire! Estimated length: 200 pp.

*DREAM WORLDS, edited by Lori Chapek-Carleton, will consist of art, poetry and prose taking place on the "Shore Leave" planet. Both new and previously published material by a variety of contributors. Photo-offset, reduced print, estimated length 200 pp. Due out in Winter '79/Spring '79. Limited Edition -- only as many copies as are ordered will be printed. A one-shot 'zine, another T'Kuhtian Press Special Publication.

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NOTE: "Twilight Of The Heroes" appeared in RBCC #'s 137 and 139-145.

OTHER AVAILABLE BACK ISSUES (Only 1 or 2 copies of each): #'s 71,84,85,87,88,91,92,96,98,99,101,103 (cover smeared), 104

#57-72 pages--John Fantucchio cover of Deadman, Batman drawing by Jim Jones, repro of Black Condor panel, Red Ryder article and more.

#58-60 pages--Fantucchio cover of Capt. America vs. the Red Skull, Oddity Page by Ray Miller, article on Marvel comics, and more.

#106-100 pages--Don Newton cover of The Phantom, "Films Fantastique on THE THING FROM ANOTHER WORLD, "Wood's Word", Information Center by Ray Miller, "The Williamson Collector", Capt. Marvel, Jr. art.

#107-100 pages--Color cover of Capt. Marvel, "Cliffhangers" on THE SPIDER'S WEB, "The Williamson Collector", "Pulps" on Ray Bradbury (part one), Comic Collector's Comments, Information Center, "Science Fiction in Review", "Wood's World", with part one of a CAPT. SCIENCE reprint.

#120-88pages--Front cover by Steve Fabian of Dr. Fate, "Dr. Fate" article by Ray Miller, "Forbidden Planet: Revisited", "Pertwillaby Papers" conclusion, EC comics articles, etc.

#121-80 pages--Full color cover by Don Rosa; this special Vaughn Bode memorial issue features an interview with Bode, an analysis of his strip "Sunpot", a retrospective look at Bode's work and career by George Beahm and much more including a great deal of rare, little seen Bode art.

#123-84 pages--Front and back cover by Steve Fabian of scenes from MAXOR OF CIROD, "A Look At Space:1999", "JAWSMANIA STRIKES!", "Maxor" part 2 by J.A. Richardson, werewolf strips drawn by Kerry Gammill and Alan Hanley, report on the Orlandocon, "EC Artist Collector", part 2 of Dell comics column on "Pogo" and regular features.

#124-84 pages--Two color front cover by Mark Hicks by Bob Susor, back cover of Conan by Mike Zeck; "Subjectivity" part 1; "Maxor" part 3; nine page article on "The Outer Limits"; E.C. Artist Collector, and other regular features.

#125-84 pages--FULL COLOR front and back covers by Wrightson, "Subjectivity" part two, "Maxor" part four, "Kelly-Pogo Portfolio" part one, "Dr. Wertham and the Classics Horror", "E.C. Artist Collector", "Information Center" by Don Rosa, Comic Collector's Comments, Critique, etc.

#129-80 pages--SPECIAL KING KONG ISSUE!!-Front cover by Tom Sutton, back cover by Tod Klein and super centerspread by Robert Kline. Kong articles cover the novel, the comic, the movie, the censored scenes, the remake, and more. Also R.C. Harvey's ZERO HERO, The E.C. Artist Collector, Information Center, Critique, RBCC Poll results, Dell Comics and more.

#130-80 pages--FULL COLOR front cover by Tom Sutton of a sword & sorcery scene in a castle, back cover by Ralph Fowler of a symbolic scene from "2001". First installment of Don Rosa's new "Pertwillaby Papers" strip, first "Comicopia", 5 pages of R.C. Harvey's ZERO HERO, article on "The Power of 2001" with unique stills, centerspread of Smaug the dragon by Steve Fabian, five page retelling of PSYCHO with graphic illustrations, index to WDC&S #211-260, "Critique" and more.

#131-84 pages--SPECIAL RAY BRADBURY ISSUE!! - Front cover by Steve Fabian, 2-color back cover by Tom Sutton, centerspread by Mike Zeck, comic strip adaptation of "Time In Thy Flight" by Ron Wilber, and other art by Don Rosa, etc. Many articles on Bradbury including an anotated index to the E.C. comic adaptations.

#132-84 pages--Front cover of Adam Strange by Mike Zeck, back cover of SILENT RUNNING scene by Ralph Fowler. Artist Profile #1 on Mike Zeck, "Adam Strange" article by Howard Siegel with much new art including centerspread and one other page by Tom Sutton as well as another full pager by Mike Zeck. "Films Fantastique" on SILENT RUNNING illustrated by Ralph Fowler.

#133-80 pages--FULL COLOR front cover painting of weird SF scene by FRANK BRUNNER. Back cover of The Destroyer by Mike Zeck. Artist Profile on Steve Fabian.

#135-84 pages-Front cover by Mike Zeck of the Blue Beetle, eight page interview with Tom Sutton including a lot of new artwork, "SPACED: 1998 2/4" by Ron Wilber, Profile on Ron Wilber, conclusion of "The Pertwillaby Papers" by Don Rosa, INFORMATION CENTER, E.C. ARTIST COLLECTOR, etc.

#136-84 pages-Front cover by Mike Zeck and back cover by Dennis Fujitake of The Creeper, article on The Creeper with art by Rosa, Wilber, etc. Eight page SF strip by Fujitake. Artist Profile on Don Rosa. INFORMATION CENTER illustrated by Hilary Barta and more.

#137-80 pages-Front and back covers by Steve Fabian, article by Robert Weinberg on the new writers of the Conan saga. An interview with make-up wizard Rick Baker including stills and a Kerry Gammill flip. ARTIST PROFILE on Kerry Gammill. Part one of "Twilight of the Heroes" by Ron Wilber. Don Rosa's INFORMATION CENTER and more.

#138-80 pages-Front cover by Mike Zeck, back cover by Steve Fabian, both of John Carter of Mars. Article on "John Carter of Comics" with art by Gammill and Hempel. Also 4 pages of THE UNKNOWN WRIGHTSON. Don Rosa's IC plus part one of a new PERTWILLABY PAPERS adventure.

#139-84 pages-[SPECIAL "STAR WARS" ISSUE]- FULL COLOR front cover by RALPH FOWLER, FULL COLOR back cover by Morris Scott Dollens. Spectacular artwork by STEVEN FABIAN, DON ROSA, KERRY GAMMILL (2-page Cantina fight), RON WILBER (4 page satire), and much more! An interview with MARK HAMILL, article on Marvel's STAR WARS comics and more!

#140-84 pages- Front cover by Mike Zeck of Capt. Atom and back cover by Mike Zeck of Thor. Long article on Capt. Atom featuring artwork by Kerry Gammill, Tom Sutton, Hilary Barta, Dennis Fujitake and more. Articles on DARK STAR and THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW. Part final part of "Twilight of the Heroes", "Pertwillaby Papers". I.C. and more.

#141-84 pages-Front cover by Kerry Gammill of Hawkman, and back cover by Ron Wilber of John Carter & Tars Tarkas. Article on the Eisnerish series "The Secret Files Of Dr. Drew" plus one of the old strips reprinted. Interview with final art. Also TWILIGHT OF THE HEROES, INFORMATION CENTER, etc.

#142-84 pages-[Special CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND issue] FULL COLOR front cover and FULL COLOR centerspread paintings by Ralph Fowler. CE3K art by Don Rosa, Kerry Gammill, Mark Hempel, Ron Wilber and others. "UFO's in Comics" and more. Also THE PERTWILLABY PAPERS, TWILIGHT OF THE HEROES, CRITIQUE, INFORMATION CENTER, etc.

#144-84 pages-Front cover by Ron Wilber, 2-color back cover by Morris Scott Dollens, 7 page profile on Dollens, article on Tim Kirk, unpublished VAUGHN BODE interview.

#145-84 pages-Kerry Gammill KING KONG cover, Interview with DAVID MICHELINIE, Hembeck artwork, TWILIGHT OF THE HEROES.

#146-84 pages-Wraparound cover and centerspread by WENDY PINI, detailed article on THE REQUEST, complete AVENGERS TV index, "Films Fantastique" on YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN, Don Rosa's Cover Gallery on "The Great DC Gorilla Fetish".

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STELLAR GAS

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Della Van Hise

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W A R N I N G

No age statement is required to purchase STELLAR GAS, however, some of the stories in our first issue do contain specific ideas. There is absolutely no sexually "explicit" material within STELLAR GAS, BUT the story LOST IN THOUGHT does have one "love scene." If you are easily offended by ideas and broad generalities, STELLAR GAS may not be the zine for you. Please read at your own discretion.

M O R E

In addition to the stories mentioned above, there will be other short stories, as well as poetry by: JEANNE POWERS
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and others. . .

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O T H E R P R O J E C T S

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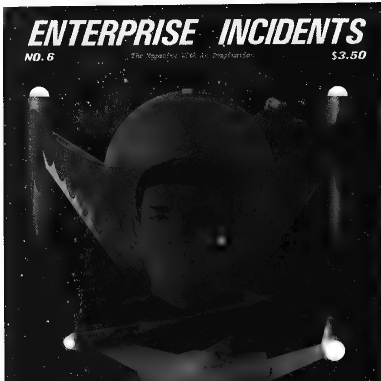

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Our expansion to 76 pages now allows for ES to explore the world of fan fiction. The lead article in this section spans 7 pages and discusses the many different types of fan fiction zines, as well as recommending a few. There is also a discussion of the legality of SF fan fiction, a review of some specific fanfic zines, an article by Corny Downes in which she discusses her ground-breaking fanfic story 'Alternative' and more. There are even some fan fiction stories (never before published) which run the gamut from humor to pathos. All this and more including artwork by Eddie Eddings, Martin Cannon, Fred Hemback, Gordon Carleton, Hilary Barta and more!

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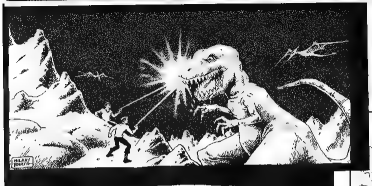

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TREK #11 = $3.00 - Full color wraparound cover painting of the Enterprise from the new STAR TREK movie! **NEW** There is also an article on the film which includes behind-the-scenes shots of the new sets. Other articles on "City", Kirk, more.

TREK #10 = $3.00 - Full color covers. Special CAPTAIN KIRK issue. Articles include "A Brief Look At Kirk's Career", a critique on William Shatner, and various other articles on Kirk. Also nice artwork by Monica Miller and Joni Wagner.

TREK #9 = $3.00 - Full color covers (including 2 STAR WARS stills), "An Evening With George Takei", an article on Dr. McCoy, two divergent articles on how STAR TREK handled time travel and over ten pages on STAR WARS including behind the scenes pics and many stills from the film.

TREK #8, THE MAGAZINE FOR STAR TREK FANS = $3.00 - Full color front cover painting of Spock & Sulu, two articles on Gene Roddenberry, "The Psychology of Mr. Spock", a complete index and review of all the animated Star Trek episodes (with many fine stills), "Star Trek Mysteries Solved!" and more.

TREK #7, THE MAGAZINE FOR STAR TREK FANS = $3.00 - full color cover of Kirk, Spock & Yeoman Rand, exclusive interview with Grace Lee Whitney, a look at Mr. Spock, Trek roundtable, Trek Trivia, Media Briefs, and much much more!

TREK #6, THE MAGAZINE FOR STAR TREK FANS = $3.50 - Full color front cover of Kirk from "Amok Time", article on "2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY", long article on the Star Trek special effects models with never before published stills of the Romulan & Klingon models, Enterprise diagram, part two of a British ST comic strip reprint and more!

8 X 10 FULL COLOR STAR TREK PHOTOS - $3.00, 5 or more $2.50 - Send 25¢ for list of 100 pictures. These prices are for Glossy photos. Add 50¢ per print for silk. If there is a specific scene you want which I don't happen to have stocked but can get made up I will do them for the same prices listed above. Any STAR TREK still I have previously advertised in the REC is also still available.

STAR TREK: HOUSTON - $3.50 - New slick publication has full color front and back covers (the front a photo, the back a painting), interviews with James Doohan and Walter Koenig, "An Evening With Gene Roddenberry", "The Cage/The Menagerie: A Comparison", "The Tholian Web" photo retelling, "Where No Man Has Gone Before" article, "Star Trek: Beyond The Pilots". All articles have many photos. Also art by Steve Fabian and Don Rosa. Excellent!

SPIRIT SECTIONS = $4.25 each - These sets contain ten different 8 page sections beginning chronologically with the very first "Spirit" on June 2, 1940. Each section consists of a seven page Spirit strip with one page of background history on the creation of that particular story written by the man who originally created it, Will Eisner! These are printed in black and white the same size they originally appeared in over thirty years ago.

SET #1
SET #2

CINEFANTASTIQUE Vol. 6 #4/Vol. 7 #1 = $6.00 - Special double-size (96 pages) STAR WARS issue. 24 pages in full color. Complete story on the making of STAR WARS. Includes interviews with 24 of the artists, technicians and actors who made STAR WARS possible. SPECTACULAR!!!

DRACULA COVER BY DON NEWTON - 75¢ - Full color, 8 1/2 X 11.

CLOCKWORK ORANGE SOUVENIR MAGAZINE = $1.00 - Eight page tabloid magazine on slick paper issued by the studio in conjunction with the film and contains many full color stills and articles entirely on the film, Kubrick & Malcolm McDowell.

ACTION COMICS #1 REPRINT = $2.50 - This is a giant 10 X 13 inch FULL COLOR reprint of this classic Golden Age comic which featured the very first Superman story.

THE SHADOW #1 [D.C.] = $1.00 - The original pulp adventure hero as interpreted by Mike Kaluta. Sure to become a classic!

MR. A by Steve Ditko = 75¢ - This fanzine features four complete strips of "MR. A" by Ditko (totalling almost 40 pages) plus color covers and color center-spread as well. It's Ditko at his best!

FULL COLOR FRAZETTA FAMOUS FUNNIES PRINT = $1.25, two for $2.00. 9 X 12 full color print of the Frank Frazetta Buck Rogers cover of FAMOUS FUNNIES #214.

DETECTIVE COMICS #27 REPRINT = $2.50 - This is a giant 10 X 13 inch FULL COLOR reprint of this classic Golden Age comic which featured the very first Batman story

FANTASTIC FANZINE #12 = $1.50 - Beautiful full color cover painting by Robert Kline, plus other excellent art by Newton, Cockrum, Kline, Richardson as well as a color centerspread by Fantucchio. Also, several well written articles and an excellent Robert Kline interview studded with many beautiful examples of his artwork.

THE ART OF NEAL ADAMS = $3.00 - Full color front and back covers, the back cover being an unpublished cover planned for Warren's "Spirit". There is a great deal of previously unpublished art for projected comic covers, movie posters, record albums, the play WARP, comic strips and more. Excellent.

FANDOM ANNUAL #1 = $2.50 - Fantucchio cover, many many articles on Golden Age characters and comics such as Fawcett, FLASH COMICS, Wedor comics, etc. with many art reproductions. Also an article on EC's WEIRD SCIENCE and an interview with Harvey Kurtzman. Color front and back covers.

FANDOM ANNUAL #2 = $5.00 - Illustrated interview with Fantucchio, as well as one with Joe Kubert. The complete SAVAGE EARTH strip by Don Newton (19 pages), art by Finlay (portfolio), Wrightson, Wood, Richardson, Newton, Raymond, Frazetta (gallery of classic covers) and others. Articles on Golden Age comics, Batman, Blue Bolt, Walt Disney Comics, EC's New Trend, Joe Orlando, WEIRD SCIENCE, Ghost Rider and considerably more.

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ENTERPRISE INCIDENTS #1 - $3.00 - Beautiful front cover of Spock from 'Amok Time" by Steve Fabian, back cover of the Enterprise by Mike McKenney, centerspread of two Federation ships by Paul Gorman, inside front cover of Kirk & Spock fighting by Ralph Fowler, 11-page retelling of "Amok Time" using stills and captions, an interview with John Colicos, article on the Star Trek special effects models, interviews with Roddenberry, Harlan Ellison, Norman Spinrad, George Takei and James Doohan, and more!

SECOND PRINTING! FULL COLOR COVERS!

ENTERPRISE INCIDENTS #2 - $3.00 - Full color front and back covers (the front from "Mirror, Mirror", the back a rare early first season Star Trek color publicity shot). Also a complete re-telling of the episode "Mirror, Mirror" with over 30 stills and a one page analysis of the episode; an article on Leonard Nimoy as Sherlock Holmes; an article on Star Trek ship models; a Star Trek review section covering Star Trek items currently available from various sources; a photo feature on Leonard Nimoy using pictures and articles on him reprinced from the 1960's; an interview with DeForest Kelley and more!

ENTERPRISE INCIDENTS #3 - $3.00 - Special "MENAGERIE" issue!!! Full color covers, a 14 page recap of "The Menagerie" with many stills, an article on Jeffrey Hunter, two pages of Star Trek Bloopers, "How Those Star Trek Devices Really Work!" (with many behind-the-scenes stills), The STAR TREK ARCHIVES, The Star Trek Review, a profile of Gene Roddenberry, artwork by Fowler & Wilber.

ENTERPRISE INCIDENTS #4 - $3.00 - Full color back cover painting by Morris Scott Dollens (brand new), recap of Star Trek episode "The Doomsday Machine", a look at what the Shuttlecraft mock-up looks like now, two pages of exciting new Ralph Fowler artwork, a detailed profile of William Shatner, an interview with William Shatner, 3 pages of Star Trek Bloopers, The Star Trek Archives, The Star Trek Review and more!

ENTERPRISE INCIDENTS #5 - $3.00 - Full color covers, "Behind-The-Scenes of STAR TREK" photo feature, "The Banned Episodes of STAR TREK", a report on why the announced new STAR TREK tv series was scrapped, "STAR TREK vs. STAR WARS", an 11 page recap of "This Side of Paradise", 3 pages of STAR TREK BLOOPERS, "The STAR TREK Archives", "The Star Trek Review" and more.

CINEFANTASTIQUE Vol. 5 #4 - $3.00 - Special WAR OF THE WORLDS issue with 29 pages devoted to this film and seven of those pages are in full color including the beautiful cover painting of a Martian. Many behind the scenes stills and information. A lot of choice, rare photos! Also reviews of the STAR WARS book and more. Interview with Jim Danforth in which he explains why he resigned from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences over their awarding a special Oscar to the new KONG (the story involves more than you might think!)

NEWTON PORTFOLIO - $1.00 - A collection of great Don Newton art! Remember his classic renderings of Hangman, Thor, Solomon Grundy, the Dweller..?

ENTERPRISE #1 - $2.00 - Full color wraparound cover artwork by Eddings, section on the psychological and anatomical structure of a Vulcan including illustrations. Part one of the transcript of the TOMORROW SHOW with DeForest Kelley, James Doohan and Walter Koenig, a review column and more.

STAR TREK GIANT POSTER BOOK - $1.50 each - #4,7,16,17 -
#4 (Klingons, Romulans & "Journey To Babel")
#7 ("The Enemy Within" critique, analysis of Capt. Kirk and more).
#16 ("Mirror, Mirror" critique and more)
#17 ("Space Seed" critique, the costumes of STAR TREK, ST's use of time travel & longevity)

SERIAL ENDING-ESCAPE PICTORIALS - $3.00 each - These are all on heavy stock, 8 1/2 X 11, contain sequence shots from the end of each chapter showing the cliffhanger ending, then one shot from the start of the following chapter showing the escape, also the Opticals (From Chapter One) of leading players, title card, chapter one card, supporting players, credits, recap forward card, eight frame sequence. All of these are blow-ups from the actual film frames. Other stills are also shown, identification of non-listed players, complete detailed chapter-by-chapter synopsis, filming start-stop dates, National release date, footage, running time, editing dates of each chapter, who actually wrote the music, production number, general notes on the serial and production notes. Each has color front and back covers. The available are: DAREDEVILS OF THE RED CIRCLE,

MARVEL TIMES #1 = $1.00 - Articles on Barry Smith, sword & sorcery in comics, comic reviews, Golden Age Timely cover and more.

ART FANTASTIQUE #1 = $2.50 - Color cover and complete issue devoted to reprints of old Virgil Finlay pulp art. Includes much of the long out of print "Best of Virgil Finlay" published a few years ago as well as other pieces. Beautiful!

ART FANTASTIQUE #2 = $2.50 - Color cover by Williamson & Frazetta and interior is devoted to rare art reprints by Frazetta, Crandall and Wood. Includes much work which is difficult to find or hard to obtain outside of obscure hardcover books and pulps. Excellent!

EC REPRINTS = $1.50 each - FULL COLOR, virtually exact reprints of classic issues of EC comics. Art by the greats: Al Williamson, Reed Crandall, Graham Ingels, Wally Wood, Jack Davis and others. Issues presently available from us are:
WEIRD SCIENCE #15, SHOCK SUSPENSTORIES #6 & #12, HAUNT OF FEAR #12, WEIRD FANTASY #13, CRIME SUSPENSTORIES #25, VAULT OF HORROR #26 and the first issue of WEIRD SCIENCE (#12).

LONG TOM'S AMERICANA COMIX - $4.25 - This large 12 1/2 X 17 1/2 book reprints four classic Golden Age strips in a large attractive poster size format. These are prime Golden Age from 1940-41 and include two SPACEHAWK by Basil Wolverton, the famous Daredevil battles the Claw story from SILVER STREAK COMICS #7 and the Blue Bolt origin story by Joe Simon. Forty pages for the fortie!!

MARVEL COLLECTORS HANDBOOK #1 - $1.25 - Complete index to the FANTASTIC FOUR comics, illustrated with cover reproductions, pin-up pages by Kirby of the Sub-Mariner, Dr. Doom, Silver Surfer, etc, as well as a two page interview with Jack Kirby, the like of which you'll never see in FOOM!

INSIDE COMICS #2 = $1.00 - This is fandom's magazine of investigative reporting. This issue features an article on the Disney Studios and what they have become since Walt's death (written by a man who had an important job at the studios), an excellent interview with the very articulate and creative Harvey Kurtzman, Southern Calif. mini-cons, viewpoints by Steve Ditko and C.C. Beck and much fascinating news.

SERIAL PICTORIAL = $1.25 per volume - Each volume consists of 15 full size 8 X 10 stills and one half page still, all printed on heavy stock. The volumes still available are:
DRUMS OF FU MANCHU
DARKEST AFRICA,
ZORRO'S FIGHTING LEGION, SECRET AGENT X-9, and
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SCIENCE FANTASY FILM CLASSICS #1 = $4.00 - Slick newsstand mag published in Fall of '77. 72 pages. Lots of color. Long features on STAR WARS, 2001, and FORBIDDEN PLANET.

SCIENCE FANTASY FILM CLASSICS #2 = $2.50 - 72 pages, lots of color. Long features on CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND, also SILENT RUNNING and WAR OF THE WORLDS.

SCIENCE FANTASY FILM CLASSICS #3 = $3.50 - 72 pages, lots of color. Long features on STAR TREK, THIS ISLAND EARTH and LASERBLAST.

FUTURE #1 = $3.50 - 80 pages, lots of color. Features on the early, unused STAR WARS posters. Long article with lots of color repro of S.F. art by Chesley Bonestell. Interview with Fred Pohl and with Douglas Trumbull. Also articles on Rick Baker as well as THE MAN FROM PLANET X.

SCIENCE FICTION HORROR & FANTASY #2 = $2.50 - Not a newsstand pub but just as slick and well produced. Features include articles on STAR WARS, THE MUMMY, METEOR, SUPERMAN, QUARK, INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS, RAY BRADBURY, CHRISTOPHER LEE and more including a long interview with DOUGLAS TRUMBULL which includes all of the excellent photos (in color and black & white) which were in the now out-of-print January 1978 issue of the AMERICAN CINEMATOGRAPHER which covered in depth CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND! Also an interview with MARK RAMELL.

NEW

THE STAR WARS ALBUM = $6.00 - The slick 80 page book published by Ballantine which covers the making of STAR WARS with lots of photos, many in color. Front and back covers by Greg and Tim Hildebrandt.

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND Souvenir Book = $5.00 - This slick booklet was available in a few theatres which CE3K was released in December 1977. Has cast, credits, lots of stills with many in color. Nice.

THE STAR WARS WEEKLY #1-6 = $1.00 each - British oversized weekly comic which reprints the Marvel STAR WARS comic in black & white (Weekly #1&2 = Marvel's STAR WARS #1) plus SF back up strips. These won't last long.

CAPTAIN GEORGE'S WHIZZBANG #16 = $1.00 - Excellent nine page article on the special effects wizardry of the Lydecker brothers (many behind the scenes stills); G-8 AND HIS BATTLE ACES article; "Favorite Films Of 1944"; old comic strips & ads plus reviews of recent books and films and more.

EERIE #2 = $5.00 - Mint condition. I have a limited number of copies of this. Frazetta cover. Excellent early Warren mag.

GRAVE TALES = $2.25 - This book features comic strips, all new, printed on extra heavy stock to be suitable for coloration in any way you want. There's strips by Don Newton, Mike Roberts and Robert Parsons, all in the horror & SF vein. There are also single page illustrations by Don Newton as well as others, including some very fine drawings reprinted from old pulp magazines.

ROBERT KLINE SWORD & SORCERY POSTER = 65¢ - Two color poster on slick paper, 8 1/2 X 11.

ROCKET'S BLAST SPECIAL #1 = 65¢ (Timely-Marvel), #7 = 75¢ (EC), #8 = $1.00 (CAPTAIN MARVEL SPECIAL, reteils origin in strip by Don Newton, beautiful wash centerspread of Marvel Family by Robert Kline and a new drawing of Captain Marvel by C.C. Beck, exclusively here!)

ADVENTURE LP RECORD ALBUMS = $4.00 each - These 33 1/3 long playing records were put out by MGM in the mid sixties and are virtually impossible to find today. They are not camped up versions but are regular super hero adventure stories. Each record runs 40 to 45 minutes. Those we have in stock are:
"MORE Official Adventures of BATMAN & ROBIN"
[Three episodes]

STARBURST #1-3 = $3.00 each - Recent British science fiction film magazine. Lots of color. #1) The writers of STAR TREK, the making of STAR WARS, and the Jeff Hawke comic strip (over 6 pages worth). #2) THE PRISONER, a 7 page article including color stills; interview with Anthony Daniels, C-3PO; Ray Bradbury discusses CE3K; a feature on WIZARDS; 9 pages of Jeff Hawke, and a 3 page Jim Starlin strip, "The Visitor", from 1976. #3)An interview with Harrison Ford; Behind the scenes on CE3K; the LOGAN'S RUN TV show; the Superman movie; lots of STAR TREK news and more.

NEW

GOLDEN AGE COLLECTOR #1 = $1.25 - Stormy Foster by Reed Crandall; the only two METEOR MARTIN strips by Basil Wolverton; also The Web and Steel Sterling. All are original Golden Age strips reprinted with beautiful halftone reproduction.

GOLDEN AGE COLLECTOR #2 = $2.00 - Color cover of Blue Bolt by Don Newton and no less than six Golden Age strips including the Green Lama by Mac Raboy (from GREEN LAMA #1), Blue Bolt by Simon & Kirby, Spacehawk by Basil Wolverton (from TARGET #7), the Twister, the Claw, and a little known classic Dr. Drew story printed from the original art (this is done in a very pronounced Will Eisner style by Grandenetti).

GOLDEN AGE COLLECTOR #3 = $2.50 - Color cover of Firebrand by Don Newton and five long Golden Age strips. Features Firebrand by Reed Crandall, The Green Lama by Mac Raboy, Space Patrol by Basil Wolverton, Captain Daring by Reed Crandall (printed from the original art), and The Fighting Yank. Back cover is the excellent Mac Raboy cover of GREEN LAMA #2.

GOLDEN AGE #3 = $1.50 - Front and back cover by Don Newton'(front in color); EC war comics article by Tom Fagan, seven page article on serials and more.

GOLDEN AGE #4 = $1.25 - Front cover by Don Newton, centerspread by Newton of Spy Smasher, portfolio of pages and covers from EC science fiction comics, Jim Jones drawing of Ming the Merciless, articles on JUNGLE COMICS, Landon Chesney and more.

GOLDEN AGE #5 = $1.25 - Excellent front cover by Don Newton of SF hero in hand to jaw combat with monster, back cover by John Adkins Richardson of Hawkman, articles on TOP NOTCH comics, Cary Bates, Forrest Ackerman and others. Numerous illustrations by Don Newton.

GOLDEN AGE #6 = $1.25 - Centerspread by John Adkins Richardson of the Fantastic Four, three page portfolio by Robert Kline of heroes from CLUE COMICS, reprints of excellent art from Spanish comics, "Iyzor The Prehistoric Man" strip by Jim Chase and more.

GOLDEN AGE #7 = $2.00 - Wraparound color cover of Tarzan by Don Newton, fantastic six page Richard Corben portfolio "The World Of Conan", in-depth interview with John Adkins Richardson, "Mwemo, Son Of Little Nemo, In Nostalgia" is a beautiful nine page strip by John Richardson featuring all of the Golden Age greats, serial article on "Rocketman" by Earl Blair, more art by Newton. Mason. Richardson, etc.

$LLUSTRATED COMIC COLLECTORS HANDBOOK Vol. 2 = $1.25, Vol. 3 = $1.50, Vol. 4 = $1.25 - Capsule histories and illustrations of Golden Age heroes, both the well known and the very obscure. The first two volumes include art by Fantucchio, and the final volume has art by Newton and Richardson as well as cover reproductions.

TARZAN = $1.25 - Full color poster by Don Newton, 11 X 17.

SHAZAM 1973 SUMMER EDITION = $2.50 - Life magazine size, 80 pages, all full color. Features six Golden Age classics with the entire Marvel Family together and in individual stories. Also a behind the scenes talk with C.C. Beck, special section on "How To Draw The Shazam Family", a diorama featuring Captain Marvel, a double page poster and more.

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THE ALIENS = 60¢ - Two-color cover print by Robert Kline, 8 1/2 X 11 on heavy slick paper.

FANTASTIC EXPLOITS #14 = 75¢ [The Lion by Biljo White, two episodes of Buck Rogers, art by Fantucchio, Joe Rabon & more]
#16 = 85¢ [8 page "Dr. Weird" strip by Howard Keltner and Jim Starlin, conclusion of "Massacre" by Frazetta and two episodes of Buck Rogers]
#17 = $1.00 [Reprints three strips: White Indian by Sid Check, "The Lost Lives of Laura Hastings" by Al Williamson, and "Captain Science" by Joe Orlando and Wally Wood]
#18 = $1.00 [Two reprints of TOR by Joe Kubert including the origin from #1 and "Black Valley" from #3 which includes a double-page spread. Also cover of #1 and "Prehistoric Animals" pages]
#19 = $1.00 [All EC issue with three SF strips: "My World" by Wood, "Food For Thought" by Al Williamson and "They'll Be Some Changes Made" by Wally Wood]
#20 = $1.00 [Three complete strips by Frazetta: "The Monsters from The Mists" and "When The Earth Shook" from THUNDA #1 and a beautiful White Indian strip "Sleep of Death"]
#23 = 75¢ ["Variations" by John Adkins Richardson. This strip is the sequel to MAXOR OF CIRQO which appeared in the now sold out FANTASTIC EXPLOITS #21. Maxor and Onu-Mra join in alliance against demons from another world. Excellent science-fantasy]

SQUA TRONT #4 = $5.00 - The ultimate EC fanzine, now back in print. Features four FULL COLOR covers by Graham Ingels, Harvey Kurtzman, Kenneth Smith and Vaughn Bode', as well as other art by them as well as Roy Krenkel, Reed Crandall, Robert Kline, Woodbridge, Torres, Metzger, Kaluta. But the real staggering feature is two previously unpublished EC science fiction strips by Reed Crandall and Krigstein. Fantastic! There's also articles on Harvey Kurtzman, the EC gang and Frank Frazetta including the refinished and refined CONAN THE ADVENTURER painting.

OMNICON CONVENTION BOOK = $2.00 - 44 pages on heavy slick paper features a previously unpublished front cover by Frank Brunner of Bran Mak Morn; three pages from the rare DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL pressbook, the Mike Zeck Manor strip from RBCC 114, the Rod Serling interview from RBCC 122 and the complete TV indexes (compiled by Don Rosa) to THE TWILIGHT ZONE, THE OUTER LIMITS, THE MAN FROM UNCLE, THE GREEN HORNET, THE PRISONER, STAR TREK and THE WILD WILD WEST and they include the many drawings which appeared with them in those now unavailable issues of RBCC. All this and more!

SQUA TRONT #5 = $3.00 - Full color front and back cover paintin of the Vault Keeper by Johnny Craig, previo ly unpublished E.C. strip "The Planetoid" b Al Williamson and George Evans (7 pages), an article on Harvey Kurtzman's animated cartoon work, on 3-D in comics, on some ob-scure comic book and pulp work by Graham Ingels, The E.C. fanzines and much more.

SPIRIT SECTIONS = 50¢ each - Actual size black & white reproduc-tions of original Spirit section strips. All from 1940: June 2 [the origin],June 9, June 30, July 7, July 14, July 21, July 28, August 4, August 11.

FLASH GORDON - 75¢ - Full color cover print by Don Newton, 8 1/2 X 11.

FIGHTING HERO COMICS SPECIAL EDITION #1 = $1.75 - Reprints from out of print early issues of FIGHTING HERO COMICS (the very early comic fanzine).

GOLDEN FUNNIES (FORMERLY VINTAGE FUNNIES) #2-4,9,10,12,14-25 = 50¢ each - Tabloid size newspaper with re-prints of some of the finest Golden Age news-paper strips such as BUCK ROGERS, SUPERMAN, TAILSPIN TOMMY, DON DIXON, LITTLE NEMO, DICK TRACY, MANDRAKE and others.

MIAMICON SOUVENIR BOOK = $1.50 - Front cover by Jack Kirby, interior artwork by Neal Adams, Vaughn Bode', Kenneth Smith, Mike Zeck and others. Articles on investing in comic art, Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, Neal Adams, James Doohan and more.

"DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL" COLOR PHOTOGRAPH = $1.00, 2/$1.50 8 1/2 X 11 still in full color shows Gort and Klaatu standing on the flying saucer.

BLACK & WHITE MR. SPOCK STILLS = $1.50 [Mr. Spock & 3-D Chess set]. $1.00 [Mr. Spock from "Amok Time"].

STAR TREK SOUVENIR BOOK #2 = $1.00 - Features ten pages of the rare British Star Trek strip, an interview with Leonard Nimoy, stills and more.

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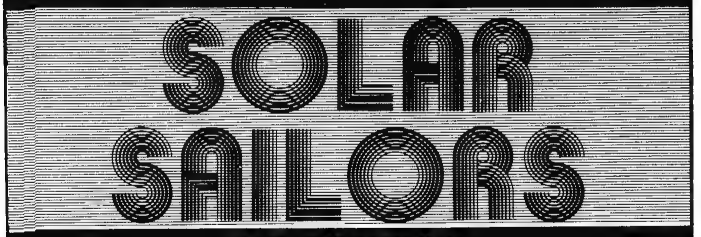

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SOLAR SAILORS, the second album by Leslie Fish and the Dehorn Crew, has recently been pressed. If you've never had the joy of hearing Leslie's songs, you're in for a real treat. Whether you're a Trekfan, an S.F. fan, or simply a good music fan, you will enjoy this unusual album. Lyrics, arrangements, and instrumentation are out of this world--in more ways than one. This is the kind of music you might hope to hear in a 22nd-century coffeehouse...or maybe in a spaceport bar.

The album has a futuristic cover by fan artists Gordon Carleton and Clyde Jones, and includes a booklet with lyrics and background information on the songs and singers. An order blank is provided below. (Make check/money order payable to THE BANDERSNATCHI PRESS. Illinois residents please add 28¢ per copy for sales tax.)

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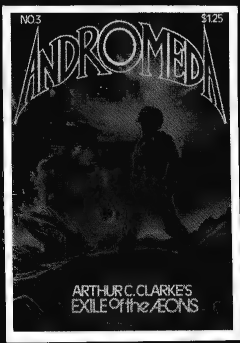

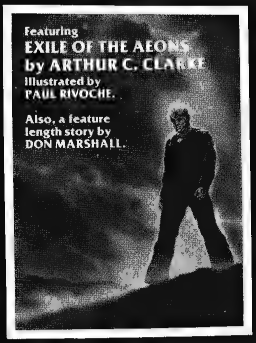

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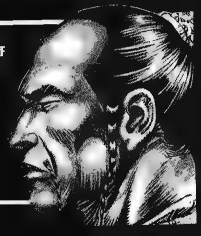

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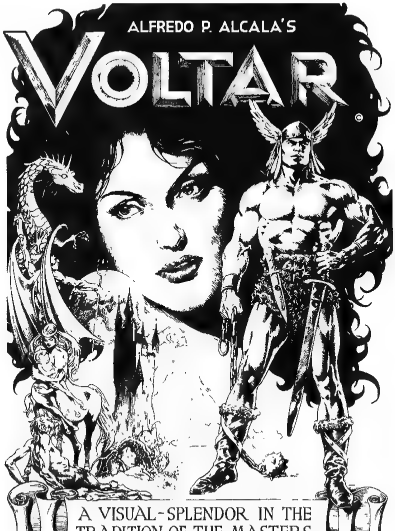

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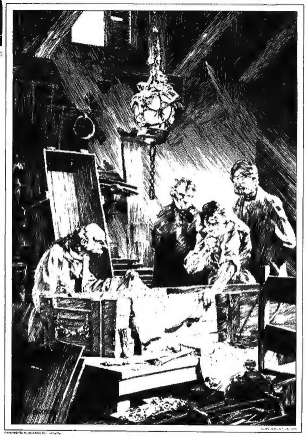

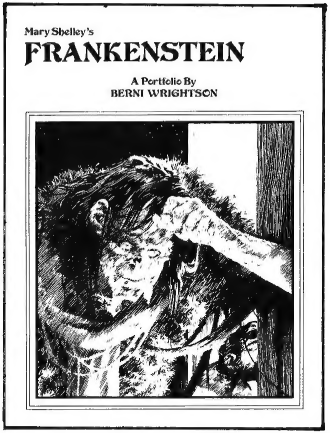

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